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**FOR
THINKERS ON EDUCATION**

Swami
SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA



SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
MYLAPORE :: MADRAS



A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.



FOR THINKERS ON EDUCATION



BY

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA



SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH

MYLAPORE

::

MADRAS

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PREFACE

We are what our education has made of us. We are not what our education could not make of us. We shall be what our education will make of us. Education fashions us exactly as we fashion it. Therefore we should take the best thinkable care, when we make the mould.

This book as the title avers, is mainly intended for those with whom *education*, as such, is the object of their major thinking. Here one will come in contact with a master-mind's life-long thoughts on subjects pertaining to *essential* education, brought under suitable groupings to help an effective study. More on the point has been spoken in the Introduction.

The lectures and the essays incorporated here were delivered and written during the years 1897 to 1911 and they were previously published either in *The Brahnavadin*, *The Prabuddha Bharata*, *The Message of the East* or *The Vedanta Kesari*. This is the first time they are being published in the book form.

We believe Educationists anywhere in the world will find in this book points for deep thinking, suggestions of intense importance and solutions of some vexed questions.

March 1, 1949 }
Madras.

THE PUBLISHER.

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INTRODUCTION

§ **SRI Sri Sashi Maharaj**, more widely known as **Swami Ramakrishnananda**, is a name held dear in the heart of the devotees and disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and admired and revered by those who have acquaintance with the Ramakrishna Order and Mission. The distinctive spiritual character of this illustrious disciple of the Saint of Dakshineswar revealed through his silent life of dedication, the self-effacing services he rendered from the monastery he conducted at Mylapore, Madras in the beginning of the century, and the part he played in the expansion of the Ramakrishna Movement in this Province and elsewhere, are still fresh in the memory of the generation which is passing out. The facts of his life have been recently recorded in the biographical literature* of religion. Though the Swami left the body thirty-seven years ago, all that he was and did, captivate and fill with joy those who wish to know about the meaning and significance of his religious ideal and have appreciation for it.

The twenty-two informal writings of varying length and importance collected in this book

**The Story of A Dedicated Life; The Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1948.*

originated as stray contributions made by the author over a fairly long period to suit different occasions. They were not written with an eye to literary effect, or formal excellence or with any premeditated sequence. The Swami's life was a continuous act of devotion in the closest contact with the living Ideal of his peerless *Guru*. He never confused book-learning with wisdom, never was a slave of words, and hardly practised the art of writing for the Press. Hence to the mere literary man the value of these writings is negligible. We should not, nevertheless, forget the fact that while the eloquent are heard with pleasure, the truly wise are heard with healthful result to the soul. The wisdom of the utterances of a person is proportionate to the greatness of his life and realisations. Although the thoughts and views of the Swami are all based on spiritual traditions that have an established significance, there is an originality in the manner of presenting them which is his own. He always applies a rational test to traditional knowledge, and never calls for the uncritical credulity of his readers. Therefore these unpretentious writings, however scrappy and uneven they might appear to the casual reader, have a pronounced value to all who have a spiritual outlook on life and its problems. The Swami's words have an undoubted power to

quicken the soul and inflame the moral zeal of all who look up to them for aid and guidance. The fundamental philosophy and method of mind-training stressed in every page of this work impart to it a unity and value which aptly justify the presentation under the title as found inscribed over the book.

Before we proceed to take a peep into the contents of the book and assess their value, it is necessary to describe the angle from which we should look at education in order to appreciate the ideas presented here ; this becomes necessary in view of the name which the book bears. We all have a formal and informal education. Formal education is the imparting of knowledge through schools and universities. Though instruction often ends with the school room, education ends only with life, just as it began also with life. "I learn as long as I live," said Sri Ramakrishna. Informal education continues throughout the experiences of a whole life. Formal education is generally a part of the large machinery, namely, the State, and its exponents hold that the primary aim of any progressive system of instruction is to adjust the child to the environment of Society. The idea of mind-training as the essence of education is seldom stressed in many of the formal educational institutions. These large establishments aim at imparting to the students

liberal and occupational instruction. Let us not however forget that man is to be educated not because he is to become a mechanic or technician but because he is man. To find a place for all persons in the State and to fix persons for all places seem to be the aim of education sponsored by the State. Naturally therefore the integration of the individual to the civic life moulded by the political and economic life becomes the vital point about formal education. The present system of instruction teaches a lot to enable the students to use correctly and efficiently their faculties and instruments for getting themselves vocationally prepared and socially adjusted. Perhaps they enter the arena of life with an intellectual outfit which will be the envy of their ancestors. But what about the moral and spiritual outfit? Does our education assimilate the individual to our grand spiritual and cultural traditions to the extent we require?

Herein comes the inestimable value of informal education and all agencies that help it in some way or measure. The present publication has to be considered as a very humble aid to stimulate moral and spiritual thought through a correct philosophy of religion. The importance of practical education which equips the child with the knowledge and skill to find or make all that is necessary, useful and beautiful for the healthy and progressive

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management of life can never be under-rated. Nor should it be overlooked that the present system of State-controlled education *at its best* goes a long way in inculcating into the trainees such knowledge as may help them to be correct and precise in their activities, to be refined and gentle in their manners, to find sound standards of appreciation of beauty and worth, to learn habits of reflection and thoroughness, and to acquire power to do their duties effectively. But education must be something more than equipment for the defence of nations; we should promote it not merely for political safety. If not at the formal stage, at least through self-education we should aim at producing higher men. The cultivation of oneself with reverential care alone can make the higher man. Hence we always require a way of spiritual redemption and not merely a gospel of social reform.

All who have bestowed some thought on education are generally convinced about the necessity of imparting sound moral instruction both in school rooms and outside. There is no real political or social reform so long as the individuals who compose the society remain unreformed. This, of course, is an undisputed truth that has become a truism. Reconstruction of society is impracticable without reconstructing ourselves. Even hard-headed businessmen declare that large business rests on

rectitude. The art of social life has claimed for it an army of writers and exponents in recent times. There is talk enough about the need on training children in virtuous dispositions and refined tastes and about holding before the youths attractive other-regarding motives so that they may grow up ready to respond to the claims of service. The formation of correct habits and development of social and individual virtues are emphasised as pressing needs by many top-ranking well-wishers of society. But none can be kicked through the performance of his duty. Stunts and short-cuts for obtaining success in this line, without the labour to build up a mind individually is doomed to failure. States should spend money and effort, said Mr. Galsworthy, on this great all-underlying matter of spiritual education as they have hitherto spent them on beating, destroying each other. Education for citizenship is urged from different platforms and we are repeatedly told that boys and girls should be taught to think first of others and that they should be infected with the wisdom to know that in making smooth the way of all lies the road to their own health and happiness. Amidst all the destructive nonsense that is spread through the press and platforms under the name of various 'isms' and the regular propaganda for Bacchus indulged in various disguises, salvaging society

through the salvaging of the minds of its members has become well nigh impossible. But then there will always be the grand individual attempt. The very primary assumption necessary for success in any measure in this line is that the inner man had an incommensurably greater value than all his possessions. Only when we judge civilization by the souls and not the goods it produces, we are in a position to succeed in the matter. So long as this is not done we are delivered from one difficulty through our political sagacity or economic designs only to be confronted with another.

The great scientific philosopher Bertrand Russell, makes the clear admission that the man who can centre his thoughts and hopes upon something transcending himself can find a certain peace in the ordinary troubles of life which is impossible for the pure egotist. (*The Conquest of Happiness*. p: 74). The worst education that teaches self-denial, said Sterling, is better than the best that teaches everything else and not that. We have to search for methods to get away from self-concentration. Lazy will, fear of pain, greed for pleasure and a host of other evils invade the youthful mind and imprison it within the narrow walls of self-regarding motives. To liberate minds from the domain of mere self-interest, from the claims of egotism, there must be a sufficiently

strong motive. Is the logic of social facts alone enough for this great need? Views certainly differ. We only state here that there is a well-tested age-old way based solidly on the foundation of divine philosophy and faith which always instils an ascetic temperament which naturally disposes one to self-sacrifice and higher adventure. Spiritual life, which is the pursuit of universal ends, is perhaps the best discipline to accomplish the end which Russell places as the goal of seekers of happiness.

What Swami Ramakrishnananda has attempted through his plain utterances is to make an appeal to the reflectively religious-minded, to discriminate, to reason, and to hold on faithfully to certain basic truths and to act on those truths in order to give a higher value to life. He stresses faith and reason equally; for he is convinced with Heraclitus that much wisdom is lost for want of a little faith. At every page he impels his readers to desire and seek truth, to pursue the good. A genuine Vedantist whose life was moulded in the matrix of the Great Lantern Bearer of God, Sri Ramakrishna, the Swami pierced all shams and illusions and spoke the truth as he perceived it without fear of opposition or contradiction. He probes into the cause and prescribes the remedy. To quote his own words: "... at the root of the

downfall of every nation there is immorality and sensuality. When in a nation, the people instead of serving God and Truth, serve the senses, the downfall of that nation is near at hand. When luxury, lustfulness, impiety and lawlessness go unpunished, or are overlooked, or are regarded as virtues, know that the doom of that nation is not far away. When a nation has no ideal to follow, when each individual is puffed up with vanity, thinks himself to be his own master, when religion and faith are pooh-poohed, and scepticism, the child of false reasoning, is highly extolled, honoured and followed, know the death warrant of that nation has already been issued" (p. 111) Four decades back, the Swami said about India: The downfall of Modern India is due to this want of virtuous and austere practices along with the book-learned education. If our educationists awake to this degenerating defect of modern education and try to remedy it, then there is some hope of regaining the pristine glory and grandeur for which ancient India is deservedly famous throughout the world. (p. 197). At the time when the Swami lived he noticed a grave social distemper, the wide-spread imitation of all western modes of behaviour and thought and a callous trampling down of the spiritual values which India had cherished for centuries, and with a

quivering heart he made these statements. Even today the blind reliance on all that is western as good, the fashionable irreverence and levity with regard to really good forms and ideas of ancient India, the tendency to make light of really precious heir-looms and the acceptance of foolish and demoralizing dissipations of the West and many other defects remain perhaps the same and we need not grow indignant at the use of the phrase 'downfall' of India from the pristine glory which it was.

There is a tendency now-a-days to cry down all attempts at describing the spiritual and cultural eminence of ancient India as a fossil-mentality and as a bar to future progress. It is certainly no compliment to our great past or vociferous present to pay gorgeous tributes to them and live in stupefied lethargy. At the same time it is dangerously fatal "to break sharply with the past, to court the discontinuity that brings madness, the social amnesia that comes from the shock of sudden blows or mutilations. The sanity of the individual lies in the continuity of his memory; the sanity of group lies in the continuity of its traditions; in either case a break in the chain involves a neurotic reaction, and a disturbance dangerous to life". These pregnant words of Will Durant while giving a stern warning to

the enthusiasts who want to build India, *de novo* supplies also the reason why the present author has such undisguised fondness for the ancient righteousness of India. With a glow of pride for the past, he states that even the materialists of ancient India found little charm in spending a thorough worldling's life. The celibate students of the classical days were trained to be hardy and robust and were not only learned in the lore of the days but were also sober and thoughtful. Brought up in the self-renouncing atmosphere of the preceptor's family, they were able to discharge the duties of the householder's life with strong other-regarding tendencies and with their passions and appetites subdued or moderated. Devotion to duty and spiritual exercises practised long in the preceptor's family made them loving, friendly, broad-minded, truthful and happy. Those who had a spiritual education in adolescence find that pleasure lies not in excess, even when their senses are keen and the flesh strong, and consequently they do not overstep good-breeding and decorum. Since the ancient householder enjoyed with discrimination, they know that indulgence in pleasure created only vehement craving and unwanted restlessness. Those sedate, reflective, builders of a superior spiritual society scrutinized the value of the world properly and lived wisely.

As a consequence they matured naturally into higher men, seers who realized the truth of existence and grasped the correct meaning of religion. They were modest in childhood, temperate in youth, just in manhood and prudent in old age.

The root of this national righteousness, says the Swami, is in a higher insight, in the philosophy of the higher life. In his view therefore that philosophy which deals with mere contingent truths is not worthy of holding that holy and high name which literally means 'love for real knowledge' or 'knowledge of the Reality'. The Swami's view of Hinduism is therefore really liberal and illuminating. According to him it is not a religion but a combination of religions. It is for all the past, for the present, and for all the future. This religion is the realisation of the self and not mere parading of the knowledge of religious books or the vigorous and mechanical observance of rituals and religious formalities. It is eternal and always the same. It never deteriorates, only men deteriorate. Such a religion can never be theoretical. To know and to become the Truth, that is religion. To realise God as the very Self of man is the goal and aim of every man. Man must realise that, and then he will enjoy eternal Life and Bliss. Whether we conceive of God as extra-cosmic or intra-cosmic, there is no difference. For in either case man has

to go out of the Universe of the senses. To turn to God one has to turn his back on the world; he has to draw in his outgoing senses. A man may say, "I am eternal, perfect, infinite" and yet if he has not realised this truth, his professions are mere sound and nothing more.

We find a harmonious blending of the culture of devotion towards the personal God as well as a rigorous method of self-analysis and investigation proposed by the Advaitic Scriptures in the doctrines adhered to in these writings. To gain spiritual wisdom, the author avers, worldly means are of no avail. If after a steady searching for some time a man is able to find out his true being, he will naturally care to live in that and will have no inclination to come away from it. He will feel that that is his true home and he will rest there contented. The Swami makes an analytical study of the nature, goal and meaning of human existence at some length, starting from birth. The self-centred mind of a baby, he says, is gradually more and more drawn out by the environment through the channel of the senses and it is filled with conceptions about the world. The mind has been robbed of its true nature and it therefore dwells upon the external nature which more or less satisfies its wants and hungers. Introspection is impossible at this stage as the mind is naturally emptied into the world and

the senses rove amidst its charms. But these very messengers of external nature, the senses, help to know the truth when the aspirant turns thoughtful and introspective. When the objects of pleasure are not available, or when the power to enjoy them is lost, or when a person is convinced of their evil and triviality, he starts to reflect upon his true nature and discovers his own divinity. He sees that external objects are only an occasion, true happiness lies in the mind alone. When the mind is tranquil and satisfied, one is happy. The real seat of happiness can thus be traced to the essence of the mind itself. When the external nature, the Swami argues, is in harmony with one's demands, one is happy, when it is discordant one shrinks and hides in misery. A friendly environment makes one expand and the opposite to contract. Hence happiness which is in one's spiritual self expanding under suitable conditions, is every man's birth right. Matter holds no joy, it only exploits the joy of the spirit. It makes the spirit think itself to be finite. Hence it is the seat of all misery. The soul has to circumnavigate and return to the point from where it started its adventure into external nature. Mind too is only refined matter, whereas the true nature of man is Spirit, which animates it. The two poles, mind and matter, support each other; when mind collapses,

the Universe dissolves and also *vice versa*. What remains when the sense-world is rejected and the mind is distilled into its pure nature is Reality superior to both, which is necessarily formless and infinite, God. That being the true nature of man, man attains immortal Bliss, when he realises it. This is the goal of all striving and all the rest is but auxiliary and secondary. Man's bondage and limitation consists in imagining himself to be a being only three and a half cubits in length and forgetting the infinitude of his inner Spirit. This is the source of all misery, and to go beyond, man has therefore to expand his Spirit and transcend sense-life. The philosophy of higher life is based on this retreat from sense-pleasure and search after one's own divine nature. This science of the Self which is the basis of all morality finds eloquent explanation in many of the papers published here.

In another place, the author of this book defines religion as giving God his due. God, he says, is the Eternal Being who disposes of and arranges every cosmic particle—which is the process that creates, preserves and destroys the Universe in infinite space and time. The Eternal Power, the Divine Mother, binding all, Herself ever free, energises you and me and the world. She is none other than Brahman. It is only out of vanity, says the author, that men deny the

* *

existence of God. Such people make much of the ego and think that the human mind can unravel the mysteries of the Universe. A better examination makes it clear, he says, that atheism or agnosticism creeps only into those hearts too low and narrow to hold higher ideals. Looking at the creation, no sane man can bring himself to believe that there is no Creator behind it, says he. The whole world is the working of the one divine Energy. Can order and regularity come out of non-intelligence? Is not the Universe a regular and perfect machinery. Look at the flowers. How tastefully they are made! Look at the beauties of Nature. Look at your own self. You are nothing but what that Power is making you. Through this argument from design he inspires faith in the divine Providence which is always ready to help the soul that struggles for Liberation and Self-knowledge. If one should control one's senses and mind he repeatedly exhorts, one must look upon God as his own Supreme Self and love Him with all his heart and soul.

The distinction between the material and the spiritual is the very first step in religion. The next is to find out that all things bitter come from the material side and all that is sweet and happy proceed from the spiritual. Mind being a mixture, neither matter nor spirit altogether, the life which

it infolds is always a bitter-sweet. Though living in the midst of the world, when Spirit dominates nothing can rob man of his peace and joy. The more one realises the Spirit the more one's identification with the lower ego vanishes and the less one relies on bodily conditions and pleasures for one's happiness. A man of this perception knows that naked he came to the earth and naked he has to depart. Yet he shrinks from no work, for he knows that the whole world and himself belong to the Governor of the Universe. He stays in the Office of God and works like a cashier, who handles enormous sums of money without the least sense of proprietorship. The truth and meaning of religion dawn upon him and his self responds expansively beyond the ego.

Clinging to the apparent limited ego, which is diametrically opposed to the infinite divinity which is his true self, man creates a network of delusion centering on 'I' and 'Mine,' which is the cause of all his misery. What is Satan?, asks the Swami. Answer: That which makes me forget God. And what is that? The Ego. The ego makes me forget the Lord, and I believe that all these things are for me. 'There is no other hell' in the words of Gerald Heard—"and all the ranges and degrees of misery can be exactly gauged and calibrated by noting the amount of ego that is present. When

the ego dominates wholly in everyone, then you have pandemonium and homicidal frenzy, persecution-mania, insane suspicion and insane cruelty. When the ego has been checked but not resolved, then we find private suspicions, miseries complaints and hidden hatreds. When it has begun to be eliminated then we find it only linking in the corners of the mind in irrational worry, over-sensitiveness and mind-body distress. Once we realise that God alone is Pure Being, then we understand that not only can we be empty ourselves of that self which makes us ignore this truth, God does the rest—we are instantaneously filled with the Invisible Reality the moment we get rid of the visible sham...” Heaven is really being without an ego. When man asserts himself in man, says Swami Ramakrishnananda, then he commits all sorts of unworthy acts. When God asserts Himself in man, then he is good, pure, virtuous and truly loving. The man who acts on his own responsibility, is sure to commit blunders at every step. But the one who feels that he is only an instrument in God’s hands and resigns everything to Him always acts wisely. To attain to this state one must be humble. The Destruction of the ego can be effected only through humility. Humility is worth more than all the sciences, for without absolute self-abnegation no one can realise God. The more we can fix our

mind on God and forget ourselves, the more quickly shall we reach freedom. To cut out ego, the Swami repeatedly exhorts: You must know that you are utterly powerless, worthless, that of yourself you can do nothing. This is not an advice to bury ourselves in sloth and delegate all self-effort to a distant God, for he is equally emphatic that the truth is never realised by the weak, and that renunciation of one's false nature and assertion of the divine through right discrimination opens up infinite strength. The more you analyse yourself, the more you understand yourself, the more you realise your infinite nature. The key to unlock the door of infinity, says he, is in your own hands. It is through examination and analysis, through the process of self-purification that one realises the infinitude which is God.

From the above synopsis of the central content of this book, we find that the Swami has made freedom and realisation of truth, man's motive and goal of true self-education. On page 194, he states, religion is self-culture and self-culture is true education. Hence genuine education is indissolubly connected with religion. The Swami does not believe that education must be made enticing by compromises with lower ideals. If you want to improve your society, he says on page 116, improve yourselves by being moral and good. For,

the ego dominates wholly in everyone, then you have pandemonium and homicidal frenzy, persecution-mania, insane suspicion and insane cruelty. When the ego has been checked but not resolved, then we find private suspicions, miseries complaints and hidden hatreds. When it has begun to be eliminated then we find it only linking in the corners of the mind in irrational worry, over-sensitiveness and mind-body distress. Once we realise that God alone is Pure Being, then we understand that not only can we be empty ourselves of that self which makes us ignore this truth, God does the rest—we are instantaneously filled with the Invisible Reality the moment we get rid of the visible sham...” Heaven is really being without an ego. When man asserts himself in man, says Swami Ramakrishnananda, then he commits all sorts of unworthy acts. When God asserts Himself in man, then he is good, pure, virtuous and truly loving. The man who acts on his own responsibility, is sure to commit blunders at every step. But the one who feels that he is only an instrument in God’s hands and resigns everything to Him always acts wisely. To attain to this state one must be humble. The Destruction of the ego can be effected only through humility. Humility is worth more than all the sciences, for without absolute self-abnegation no one can realise God. The more we can fix our

mind on God and forget ourselves, the more quickly shall we reach freedom. To cut out ego, the Swami repeatedly exhorts: You must know that you are utterly powerless, worthless, that of yourself you can do nothing. This is not an advice to bury ourselves in sloth and delegate all self-effort to a distant God, for he is equally emphatic that the truth is never realised by the weak, and that renunciation of one's false nature and assertion of the divine through right discrimination opens up infinite strength. The more you analyse yourself, the more you understand yourself, the more you realise your infinite nature. The key to unlock the door of infinity, says he, is in your own hands. It is through examination and analysis, through the process of self-purification that one realises the infinitude which is God.

From the above synopsis of the central content of this book, we find that the Swami has made freedom and realisation of truth, man's motive and goal of true self-education. On page 194, he states, religion is self-culture and self-culture is true education. Hence genuine education is indissolubly connected with religion. The Swami does not believe that education must be made enticing by compromises with lower ideals. If you want to improve your society, he says on page 116, improve yourselves by being moral and good. For,

morality and goodness alone can improve man. Morality, he says, is the vestibule to religion. Perhaps more. Essentially there is no difference between morality and religion. An immoral religious man, it is as impossible to imagine, as a triangular circle. Religion consists in the renunciation of sensual pleasures. So also does morality. Morality raises a man from the kingdom of animals to the kingdom of God, and religion brings him face to face with God. Morality is the active side of religion. Its domain is practice and not theory. Morality is the gate-keeper of the kingdom of Heaven, and higher religion is a guide to lead man to God.

We have thus seen that the Swami's recipe for the cure of the ills of life is founded on a divine philosophy and a system of mind training of the highest order based on spiritual truths discovered and analysed by the sages. A complete submission of oneself to self-imposed laws of mind-training on the lines chalked out by him is sure to yield results far exceeding in its effects than superficial reforms. Let the clarion call of his exhortation ring throughout the length and breadth of the country, inspiring us to better application and greater realisation; let us revive the old, strong, pure faith in the power and glory of the Spirit, let us remind ourselves that we are spirits unconquerable,

all-knowing ; let us remember that matter is the servant of spirit, not spirit the servant of matter. Let us tread the path which the sages trod and follow their foot-prints ; and then indeed we shall see that the civilisation evolved by the Aryan sages, our great forefathers, is alone perfect and that their path alone is the path to victory in the great battle of life.

BOOK ONE

THE PRISTINE SCHEME

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति

न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।

भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य धीराः

प्रेत्यास्माद्धोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥

केनोपनिषद् । २.५

For one who has realized It here in this world, there is true life. For one who has not, great is the destruction. Discerning the Atman in every single being, the wise man rises from sense life, and attains immortality.

आत्मलाभात्परो नाग्यो लाभः कश्चन विद्यते ।

यदर्थं वेदवादांश्च स्मर्ताश्चापि तु याः क्रियाः ॥

उपदेशसाहस्री । १७.४.

There is no other attainment higher than that of the Self. For that is the purpose for which the teaching of the Vedas, the Smritis and actions (described in the Karma-Kanda of the Vedas) are there.

“सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसम् ।”

तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् ।

May we both, (teacher and disciple) have glory and refulgence born of holy life and study.

THE SCHEME OF LIFE AND EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

IN ancient India, the life of the twice-born, that is, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, was divided into four stages viz., (1) *Brahmachūrya* or the life of abstinence and self-control, (2) *Gṛhasthya* or the life of the householder, (3) *Vānaprastha* or life in the forest, and (4) *Bhāikshya* or the life of an indifferent mendicant.

The *Brahmachūrya* life lasted for the first twenty-five years, and each of the other stages of life also lasted for the same period, a human life being computed to last for a hundred years. Before the boy had been invested with the holy thread and initiated into the sacred *Gāyatri-Mantra* he had to live with his parents. But as soon as he got his initiation, at the age of eight or ten, he had to leave his father's house and go to the house of his would-be teacher and live with him, until the age of twenty-five when, he became master of all the branches of learning. The life spent in his professor's house is called the life of *Brahmachūrya*. The *Brahmachūrin's* life was exactly the opposite of what we call a comfortable and luxurious life. However rich his parents might be, the new student would be treated equally with his

compeers. After finishing their morning lesson they had to go in different directions of the country, some to beg uncooked rice and vegetables, some to bring firewood from the neighbouring forest, some to look after the cattle of his teacher in his pasture ground; some to work in the field, while some remained at home to help their spiritual Mother, the wife of their professor, in cooking, by husking the paddy or pounding the spices. The food obtained from begging is far from luxurious. Although in those days, the people had a very high reverence for a Brahmana teacher and his disciples, and although they gladly filled the begging bowls of the Brahmacharins with rice etc., still, the food thus procured from the surrounding people who were seldom very rich, was not in any way comparable to the food which they used to take at their houses where a loving mother would spare no pains to see her child well fed and well clad. But, however, the food, although not very alluring, was substantial, and the keen appetite of a young man soon got used to it. Even the sons of kings had to go and live with their Gurus, along with other boys, faring little better than they.

Thus it is clear that the Brahmacharins were trained to be hardy and robust in their constitution. It is not rich food that makes a man strong physically. It is common, coarse, substantial food.

such as rice and wheat, with timely exercise, and breathing fresh air all day long that gives a real tone to the health of the man, and these things the Brahmacharins were not in want of. After finishing their studies they had to go back to their houses, and used to get themselves married, and lead a householder's life till their fiftieth year. In the prime of manhood, with health and vigour in their limbs as well as in their minds, the sober young men, with all their senses controlled, with all their passions and appetites moderated and alleviated to a considerable degree, used to enter the responsible life of a householder, responsible to their families, the society they had to move in, their country, and each and every individual they had to come across. Their training in their Guru's house had already made them less selfish than they otherwise would have been and as selfishness is the mother of all crimes, these young householders of ancient India were naturally less guilty than those young men who make their senses their masters. Since health alone brings enjoyment to life, can there be any doubt, that these ancient householders, had the advantage of enjoying their life most? And their enjoyments were not blind, that is to say, they always used to keep their eyes open to the performance of their daily duties. Even in the madness of their

youthful enjoyments they never used to overlook the claims of others for similar enjoyments. They knew how to share good things with others. They were loving, friendly, broad-hearted, truthful and happy. As they were almost the masters of their senses, the senses had no power to tempt or delude them to overreach the proper bounds of good breeding and decorum. They enjoyed with their eyes open, and therefore they could clearly see that all sensual pleasures create a craving and restlessness in man to have them over and over again; but as in this world pleasurable things are not so very cheap as painful ones, they could see that such cravings could be seldom fulfilled, and as such, when any such temptation used to appear in their mind, as the natural outcome of contact-born pleasure, they could at once detect its tempting nature, and like Jesus of Nazareth, could boldly say to the tempter, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" In course of time these contented house-holders of ancient India, would find full satiety with all worldly enjoyments and hence, at the end of their fiftieth year, it was not very difficult for them to give up their family lives in search of a higher one. It is natural for those people, who were never led away by excess of carnality, to be so sober and meditative. But the man who is intemperate in his habits, cannot

escape getting himself intoxicated with them, and his judgment, therefore, naturally will be just like that of an intoxicated man who sometimes falling in sewer, in his excess of thirst, drinks the filthy drainage water, as a fragrant, cooling and refreshing draught, mistaking the sewer, all the while, to be a pearly diamond-decorated and cushioned throne, and himself, by a sudden stroke of fortune, transformed into an emperor, until by the rough handling of the police constables, he is brought back to his senses, a little. Drinking the inebriating liquor of sensual enjoyments, the intoxicated man of the world, imagines his filthy den of a body to be the most valuable throne which he has been destined to sit upon and enjoy for eternity, forgetting the utter precarious nature of his life and its impermanency as well as its misery, until the cold, unrelenting and uncompromising hands of death remind him, but too late, about the real state of affairs. Such is not the case with a man who is sober, whose enjoyments never go beyond their proper limits, who consequently, being guided always by a clear intellect, makes all his senses friendly and serviceable to him, which otherwise would lead him to destruction. Such a man can never be blind to the fact, that human life, however happy and desirable it may be, can never last long, though there is no knowing when

he will have to take his last farewell from it. It may be the next moment. Plague may come to give him the unhappy and untimely notice that he is to leave his loving wife and children, his palatial buildings and flattering friends, his name, fame and honour, his 'boast of heraldry, pomp of power and all that beauty and wealth ever gave,' for ever. Such a man, therefore, always keeps himself ready for the call, strengthening and preparing his mind beforehand with the solutions of such problems as, 'whence am I, who and what am I.' Such a man easily finds out that he is not born with his body, nor is he destined to die with it. He and his body are two different entities altogether, and so by the misery or the bliss of the latter he should not be affected in any way. The body may die, but he knows full well, that he is immortal. Such a man looks towards this life as an insignificant portion of his eternal life. Nay, when he meditates upon his eternal nature, this small insignificant human life is left out of consideration. Such a man never believes in the tempting promises of his senses, and never gets himself deluded by the belief, that this life is all in all. His soul, therefore, naturally craves to be firmly established in that kind of knowledge which fully and clearly reveals to him that he is deathless and eternal. He finds, in time, that such knowledge can never come to

a man who takes wordly life as something very serious and worthy of one's deep attention, merely because he gets in it such apparently important and extremely tempting things as name, fame, honour, wealth, sensual enjoyments and sundry other things which baffle all calculations. Knowing its futile and trifling nature, he, therefore, attaches no seriousness to it and his whole soul is directed to understand his real nature which is eternal and ever blissful. Therefore, when the already moderate cravings of his senses get themselves almost reduced to a non-entity at the close of his vigorous manhood, when the senses are lively and naturally prone to contact-born pleasures and when they thus create a tendency to overvalue the importance of life to an ordinary man, one important question engrosses all his attention, 'who, what, and whence he is?' To get a satisfactory solution of it, he finds a housholder's life altogether unsuited to him, inasmuch as the minor things try to encroach upon his attention, which has already been occupied by the one ruling problem, 'who, what, and whence he is?' Naturally he wants at that time to lead a secluded life in the forest, to unveil the mystery of his birth and death, by cutting off all wordly connections.

So the *Vānaprastha* or the forest life is a natural sequence to the well spent life of a sober

householder. He is not forced or compelled to give up the world, but it naturally drops down from him even as the petals fall off when the fruit begins to grow out of the flower. He finds no pleasure in leading a family life, and force or compulsion alone can make him continue in that life. So he goes away from the world with his wife, handing over the care of his house to his children, and in the seclusion of the forest, undisturbed by any anxiety, he deeply searches in the innermost recesses of his heart, the solution of the problem, 'who, what, and whence he is?' It takes him several years to find out the much-longed-for solution, and in utter joy and buoyancy of spirit, he is not able to confine himself to a single place and roams all over the world alone in perfect bliss and happiness, not caring for the morrow. If any one gives him food he takes it, and if he does not find any, he is perfectly satisfied even with that. For, he has realised that he is beyond all thirst and hunger, and that he is all-perfection, all-bliss and all-knowledge. This is what is called *Bhaikshya* or the aimless, all-blissful life of a Sannyasin or Paramahansa, and the last chapter of an ancient twice-born Indian's life.

In this materialistic age, when matter or what is cognised by the sense alone is regarded to be true, it is hard to find any sympathiser with such a kind of life. People now a days love liberty and

even good-intentioned restraint is not palatable to most of them. So it is natural for such people to conclude that this kind of dividing every man's life into four different stages, is altogether arbitrary, nay, tyrannical. They say, a man might not have fully enjoyed his life by the end of his fiftieth year, so why should he give up the blessed life of a family man, instead of doing good to society, by contributing to the increase of his numbers and planning sundry means to make it vie with heaven, by finding out some means of making human life permanent and comfortable with the help of modern science.

In reply to these men, let us say that in Old India there was no compulsion, regarding the discontinuity of a householder's life after the fiftieth year. Only those, who really felt family life to be burdensome, used to go to forest-life in preference to their continuing as a householder any longer. The four divisions or stages of life were not in any way stereotyped, or fixed once for all. On the other hand, there are such injunctions, as, '*yadahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajat,*' which we find in the Upanishads, and which means, that whenever a man would feel himself disgusted with the world, finding no relish in it, and when the idea of renouncing it has the firmest hold upon him, he should give it up, and lead the life of a sannyasin, altogether un-concerned with worldly

affairs. A Brahmachari, without being a householder, can take up Sannyasa, if he finds no relish in married life. But these are all exceptional cases and exceptions always prove the rule.

Our next reply, as to being a useful member of society, by doing good to it, is that the ideas of usefulness and goodness vary in different individuals, inasmuch as they are materialistically or spiritually disposed. When a man is materialistic in his mood, that is to say, when he regards those alone to be true which he can sense, the world of phenomena alone, to him, is always true, and giving up all concern with such a world is nothing less than madness according to him. That this age is extremely materialistic, is best attested by the fact, that people now-a-days have more love for the world than for anything that is beyond the world, the pursuit of which they term a chase after a wild goose. They may have no quarrel with those people who write big philosophies about mind and soul, bringing in all sorts of transcendently whimsical theories regarding them, but when any philosopher tries to live according to the philosophy he has given birth to, he is looked down upon as a mad-cap. The highest aim of a writer of modern philosophical works seems to be, having a good sale for his extraordinary works filled up with all sorts of extraordinary theories, and

procuring an extraordinary name and fame for him. Nowadays the healer of the body is honoured much more than the healer of the soul. Our old Manu says, that whenever a Doctor or Physician visits your house, never accost him or give him a seat to sit upon; and if he wants to sit let him take his own seat, and if he wants to talk, let him talk first; but when your priest or Guru, the healer of your soul, comes, if you see him at a distance, bow down and go up to him, and with great reverence bring him to your house, offer him the best seat, and wash his feet with cool refreshing water and drink a little of the water falling from his feet to purify yourself. In old India people used to obey Manu, and therefore the healers of the soul were honoured more than the healers of the body. Exactly opposite is the tendency of this age. Whenever a Doctor or Physician comes to a modern Hindu's house, he does not know how to receive him, how to satisfy him, and when his priest or Guru comes to live with him, for a few days, or wants some pecuniary help from him, he cannot but think him to be a troublesome individual. Of course, there are honourable exceptions to this rule, and as I have already said, exceptions always prove the rule. These two opposite behaviours of the ancient man, and the modern man clearly point out to two different ages,

the ancient or spiritualistic and the modern or materialistic age.

We have already defined what modern materialism is, that is regarding those to be the final truths which we can sense. There were also materialists in ancient India who used to hold that the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe is matter and matter alone. These were the followers of Bhagavan Kapila, the father of Sankhya philosophy, the most ancient as well as the most perfect system of positive philosophy. Modern positivism, founded by Auguste Comte, which excludes from philosophy everything except the natural phenomena or properties of knowable things, and holds all inquiry into causes whether efficient or final to be useless and unprofitable, commits a great mistake by regarding the dependent and therefore unreal existence to be independent and real. Kapila, although he was a materialist, did not commit that mistake. To him matter was altogether a different thing from what we see, touch, taste, hear and smell. It is something unknown and unknowable, which coming in contact with the senses produces the universe of phenomena. So the subject matter of Comte's philosophy, instead of being an independent existence, is merely a result of the union of the self with the not-self, of Purusha with Prakriti. That philosophy which

deals with mere contingent truths is not worthy of holding the holy and high title of philosophy which literally means a love for real knowledge or knowledge of the reality. The matter of Kapila is independent of the senses, hence a materialistic philosopher of Kapila's school, must have to go beyond his senses, if he wants to come face to face with Prakriti, or the primal matter, the mother of the universe. Even a materialist of ancient India could not find solace in the world of phenomena, that is to say, could not find any charm in leading a wordly life ; much less, could an idealistic, or monistic philosopher of that period find any satisfaction in wordly pleasures. Indeed, the lover of truth, whether he be monistic or materialistic, must go beyond his senses, and consequently must go beyond the world which is born of the senses, to realise that truth. For what is Truth ? That which is always one and the same, and consequently independent and changeless. How can phenomena be regarded as real in that case ? Comte teaches us to worship the unreal. Is it perferable ?

But, though philosophically we may regard phenomena as unreal, 99.9 percent of humanity of the present day, regard them to be the only real things, for which alone life is worth living, especially such is the view that is always taken by a young man, and it is not strange. The

young man has been freshly endowed with a body which has all its senses fully developed with new energy, vigour, and life in them, each and every one of which is trying to assert itself calling upon the attention of its young votary. He has begun to enjoy life newly. Life has not yet become monotonous to him. Everything to him is new and beautiful, and therefore, attractive. To preach to such a man, that the world is false, that his newly-married wife, as well as his new born baby is false, that his home, friends, and neighbours are all false, is merely madness on the part of the preacher. What though he preaches the bare unvarnished truth? He will be merely throwing away pearls before the swine and so instead of being a wise man, he will play the part of a veritable fool.

The sages of ancient India found out this difficulty in the way of preaching 'Truth to all. How are we to get over the difficulty? Truth must be preached, however unsavoury it may appear to many. Medicine must be administered to cure the disease however unpalatable it may be to the patient. As in order to make the patient swallow bitter quinine, gilded pills have been invented by our modern doctors, ancient doctors of divinity invented similar means to make the young householder swallow those bitter doses of Truth. They were not unacquainted with the art of gilding in order to make

the Truth acceptable and attractive. They began to compile the attractive life incidents of sages and kings, of the rich and the poor, and with them they composed such charmingly romantic poetical garlands, through which the thread of Truth ran and kept the flowers in their places, that young customers began to flock from all quarters, and the demand for garlands was so very great that the sages kept on composing garlands after garlands till almost the whole of the spacious hall of Sanskrit literature were filled up with the sweet scenting *Purānas*, *Itihāsas*, *Samhitās* &c. In this way, the difficulty of preaching truth to all, was met by our ancient sages. It is our duty to take that lesson from them, and avail ourselves of those invaluable garlands, the store of which is altogether inexhaustible, to bedeck our young people with.

It is useless to preach abstract Truth to a young man, as his mind is always practically disposed. Beauty is the ruling passion of his mind, and hence whatever you have to say, you must say beautifully if you want to make any impression on a young mind. In ancient India, a young householder was not therefore altogether void of spiritual truths, inasmuch as he had to imbibe them through those attractive books of divine and ennobling poetry. But a Brahmacharin was not allowed to confine himself exclusively to those poetical works. He had to pass

through a system of prosaic discipline, and to grasp intellectually all philosophical truths which lie beyond the senses, and hence beyond the world, so much so, that occasionally, a Brahmacharin was found to become totally disgusted with even the idea of leading a married life, knowing it to be altogether false and misleading, and prefer *Sannyāsa* to *Gṛhasthya* or family-life.

Some people may ask, is this not too hard for a Brahmacharin? Then we request to study the characters of their own children. Should the children be given undue liberty? A child's mind is always after play, always after trifling things; and if you allow him full liberty he will grow up to be a shallow man, in no way different from an animal, merely eating, drinking, playing and sleeping. A human child is intended for higher things than these. We should make a god out of him and not a beast. If this is true, it is our duty not to give him undue liberty. We should make him go through a strict course of discipline, and as an uninformed young mind is more plastic than the formed mind of a man, you can at that time give it any bend you like. What higher thing is there than Truth? And which father will not like to see his child get the highest and best of all things? So it should be the duty of all parents to create a desire for the realization of

Truth in the minds of all their children, as soon as they begin to harbour the ideas of likes and dislikes. That is the reason, why in ancient days, our sages were so very strict in the matter of Brahmacharins. They were their real friends, and hence they wanted to give an ennobling turn to their minds which are extremely plastic, and hence docile at that tender age. What was apparently cruel was really most beneficial and ennobling.

Such Brahmacharins are nowadays rare in India. The guardians and teachers of our young men are themselves materialistic, and is it strange, that their wards also will be similarly disposed?

But, we have seen, materialism or positivism can never raise a man higher than the level of a beast, and as the life of a beast can in no way be liked by any, is it not our bounden duty to save ourselves from being confined to that abject level and know how to do that? Modern philosophy, dealing with unreal things, can never give us any help towards ameliorating our condition. The world with all its charms, can never promise us immortality, although, most of the time of our life, it deludes us into the belief that we are never to die. Then what to do and where to go? If we want to realize the Truth, if we want to realize that we are really immortal, if we want to be the sharers of eternal Bliss, if we want to step into that

realm reaching which we will at once recognize ourselves as perfect, if we want to be the greatest, the best, and the highest, we must have to get beyond this universe, or in other words, we must have to go beyond these senses. There is no other way.

The sages have done the work for us. Indeed, bare, unvarnished Truth cannot but be unpalatable to a man who is materialistically disposed. And who is not nowadays? But when that very Truth is coated over with the sugar of poetry, and thus when abstractions take a concrete form, instead of being repugnant, it appeals to our hearts.

Can you name a single romance, more attractive than the *Mahābhārata*, and can you name a single Epic which contains more solid truths or philosophy or is grander than this—the grandest epic, the *Mahābhārata*? It is the store-house of all knowledge, all poetry, all attraction, and all charm. Such a charming teacher is sure to attract a young mind, and is sure to appeal to his heart. Such being the case, can there be any doubt, that this book of all books, this encyclopaedia of all knowledge, this magnificent, heaven-like and all-embracing palace of the Muses, this Mother of Truth, not dazzling like the sun, but softened and mellowed like the moon, the invaluable receptacle of the divine Gita, this ocean of poetry, this *Mahābhārata* is exactly what our young men need.

EDUCATION VEDANTIC

“**W**HEN the embryo in the womb attains its seventh month, it regains its self-consciousness” says the Upanishad. At that time, it is not at all conscious of anything else beside itself, because the lake of its mind is calm and quiet without any thought and all its past lives are, as it were, reflected in its mind. Remembering all that it has done in its previous lives, it repents for all its evil deeds and prays to God to enable it to lead a purer life in the future. When it attains its ninth month, then, with the increase of its bulk, it finds that the womb is too inadequate for its life, and then alone, it begins to feel the existence of something else beside itself. It meets with resistance (a power resisting it), and then its troubles begin. Now, it wants to get rid of that trouble (since it does not like trouble) and wants a way to get out of the womb. In course of time, in this way, it willingly comes out into the world. But it is as good as going from the frying pan into the fire, for, as soon as it comes out into the world, the cold atmosphere begins to bite the system. “Self created one, God begins to pinch. The senses of the new born baby are projected outward.” And you know wherever there is pain,

there must be mind, and so, the baby's mind which was already self-centered comes out of itself and becomes mindful of the senses and then from the senses, it comes into contact with the sense-born world. It begins to see all forms through the eyes, hear through the ears, smell through the nose, and taste through the tongue and it begins to experience the chill of the climate. In this way, the conception of the world gradually comes into existence in it. In the meanwhile, it has altogether forgotten itself. The mind has been robbed out of itself and is now made to dwell upon the world external. It is not allowed to go in any more; because, as it has come into the world, it will have to redress its grievances. It has got many wants; danger presses upon it; and it does not know anything except how to stand against all untoward environments. In course of time, the baby becomes a boy. It gradually becomes more and more friendly with the world owing to the fostering care of the parents and relatives. And when the boy becomes self-helping he begins to enjoy the company of the world rather than to avoid it. Of course, by this time his mind has been altogether taken away from within it. The world is there before it and it satisfies all its hungers. The most beautiful forms are supplied to meet the senses. How many

wants are there in that little boy! It has been calculated, our philosophers have said, that men have got eleven senses: five *Jnanendriyas*, five *Karmendriyas* and one *Manas* (mind). With the help of these five sense organs, we sense the universe, and with the help of the organs of activity, we actively employ ourselves in this world to get all those things which we want to have; and the mind has the controlling power over all these other ten organs.

Now, man has also got three different moods, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. When he has a tendency to be thoughtful, all his senses answer his purposes. All the senses will have a tendency to help his thinking. When he has to be active, all the senses help him, to enable him to carry out whatever he likes; and when he wants to sleep, all his senses also take part in his laziness. In this way in three different moods, the eleven senses have each three different tendencies. So, altogether he will have thirty-three tendencies. For, the tendency of the eye is to see, of the ear to hear, of the tongue to taste, &c.; so altogether, the eleven senses have eleven tendencies; and according to the three moods, these eleven tendencies multiplied by three becomes thirty-three in all. Again, as I said, the tendency of eye is to see all beautiful forms. But the number of these forms

is innumerable. As in the case of the eye, so also in the case of other senses. Hence, the objects of our desires are innumerable, in other words, millions. And since thirty-three millions of desires a man has got, the world has been regarded in the Upanishads as unnumbered. The hunger of a man is not easily satisfied. Hunger is the desire to take in something. Hence, every desire is a hunger. For a hungry man with his thirty-three millions of desires, this infinite universe, has been placed as a dish, for him to enjoy in order to satiate his hunger. So, he begins to enjoy it. Suppose the King is giving to his subjects a grand banquet. He may have prepared innumerable delicacies and in order that every delicacy may be properly served, one must be in charge of each delicacy, and then only the guests can be satisfied. Similarly, there is man with his thirty-three millions of desires ; and there is also a power who has prepared these dishes for the enjoyment of man. And that power is God. God must have similarly got thirty-three millions of servants, each taking care of a certain delicacy (desire) which will satisfy the particular hunger of the individual. Hence, if there is a hunger in me, that can be fulfilled only by God, through his thirty-three million servants. Hence the number of Gods, according to our scriptures is thirty-three millions. They

are regarded merely as servants of God, God being the Master to order these servants, his functionaries. In this way, man goes on enjoying the universe. When a man's senses are perfectly developed they want nothing but enjoyment and with a little labour, he can have all his enjoyments. Gradually he becomes older. His physical powers get diminished. Then activity, exertion, is not very palatable to him. He wants perfect rest. He will think that he will prefer to get things without in the least exerting himself to have them, without shedding the sweat of his brow. Rest alone is the end and aim of his life. To get pleasures outside the body requires exertion, and the man has come to a stage when he dislikes exertion. When he does not get the objects of his pleasures, then alone he will begin to meditate. He who wants is an imperfect being. One who is imperfect has got good many troubles. Strength might be failing. The idea—that, 'there is death and after death where am I to go? What is to be done of my life? How can I give up my wife, children, and the world which I have been ever thinking to be my home, and all that I love tenderly? What is there beyond death?'—all these questions come before him and torment him. Then he begins to think in the right direction. Had he been perfect, he should not have felt any want, and he should not have feared anything.

Analysing himself he will find that he must die whether he wills or not. There is some power beyond his control which must take him from the world. He also wants to be eternally happy. The fact that we will be able to get happiness shows that we must exert. A man must labour hard previous to attaining happiness. This is the human lot. With thoughts like these, he will be anxious to get out of this wretched life and seek the blissful house.

Then the Vedas come to his rescue. It tells him, that he is not to die though he seems to die. Death is nothing but giving up a worn out cloth and putting on a new one. As when my clothes get worn-out, I must get fresh ones so when this body becomes useless the soul enters a new body. This is the meaning of death. So death is not an undesirable thing. Then the anxious mind gets some consolation from the Vedas. How is that ideal bliss to be secured according to the Vedas? "If a man wants to realize that highest ideal where nothing but pleasure is to be found, (Absolute Bliss), he will have to exert for it, perform sacrifices, be morally and charitably disposed and he must be a proper Brahmachari." Believing in the Vedas, he goes on regulating his works. Previous to that, he was doing only those things which could satisfy his senses. But now he begins

to regulate his senses, because the Vedas teach him that unless he is able to bring the senses under his control, he won't be able to realize the highest ideal, where nothing but the highest bliss is to be found. He looks on all living beings as his own, so many brothers and sisters. In this way, he attains a good deal of merit, by the aid of which he will realize *swarga* after his worldly death. "Swarga (Heaven) is that place which is the root of all bliss and where whatever you desire you will get immediately without exerting yourself and where your pleasures will never be followed by pain." But you are not allowed to remain there for ever. As long as you have the merit, heaven will be yours. When the merit is consumed, you will have to come back to this *Karmabhumi* to earn fresh merit. It is also said that there is some higher Bliss than Heaven which is termed 'Salvation.' Hence Heaven is not the end and aim of man. The attainment of the pleasures there, is not everlasting. The soul is hankering after something which is perennial. It does not like much exertion. When you once go to Heaven you have still the rotundity of going and coming. But man is by nature eternal. He does not want Bliss for a short period only. Then he questions within himself, 'If the object of my enjoyment remains somewhat outside me, distinct from me and

independent of me, then I cannot command it, because, it may or may not come to me. This present life is of course, a slave to passions and carnal appetites and in order to satisfy those passions, I must serve a being who has the power of supplying me with those wants, my necessities of life.' After all, what is the final goal? Man wants to be a master. Until that perfect mastery can be gained, he tries to find out whether there can be any pleasure within himself. Who am I? Has pleasure any independent existence apart from me? Is the sweet dish really pleasurable? Suppose a blind man is standing there and a certain beautiful figure is shown him. Can it give him any sort of pleasure? Can a deaf man hear good charming music? This shows, to him that pleasure is an independent entity, apart from *myself*. Suppose a man is full of anxieties and disturbances; even when anything sweet is put before him he can't appreciate it on account of the mental disturbance. Then he begins to doubt whether pleasure is really outside the man.

If the pleasure were outside the man, and if it were localised in any particular thing, then pleasure is really to be found in the thing itself. But it is not the case. Then he begins to think, 'I think the home of pleasure is the mind.' If the mind is satis-

fied, calm and quiet, then alone pleasure can be realized. Why do I love my children? Because it gives *me* pleasure to love. I love for my own sake and not for the sake of them. The nature of man is such that he loves himself the best above all things. Hence I am the source of all pleasure ; because, whatever has the power of producing Bliss, that alone I love. I love only those things which have the power of giving *me* pleasure. And so, he finds out '*I am anandam*', I am Bliss itself. The property of sugar is sweetness ; I myself being sweet to me, I am much pleased by coming in contact with that sweet sugar. But if I am always Bliss, how is it that sometimes I am very miserable, and I cannot distinguish my nature ? Then it is said, "I am always happy no doubt ; but suppose my child is chanting Vedas with other children. No doubt, the child's voice is there, but it is impossible to distinguish its voice from those of others. Similarly, although I have got Bliss within myself, still there are many disturbing elements. They do not allow us to know our real nature. They make me think that I am something other than myself. I have told you already that man is taken out of himself by the inclemency of nature. Hence the voice of pleasure in him is very feeble ; other voices drown that voice in him. I have been regarding the world as my home

making false friends which are become too clamorous in me. I have all along been in the meshes of maya (illusion). So he begins to analyse his nature. Pleasure and pain really come out of me ; but for me, they cannot exist. But at the same time, I am pleasure and what is pain? When I am not allowed to get at my pleasure, then I am miserable. Misery is the absence of pleasure. In the Universe, there are two sorts of things; one is in harmony with human nature and the other discordant. One friendly and the other unfriendly. Suppose you are writing a private letter in your own apartment. If a certain bosom friend enters the room, you don't hide it from him, on the other hand, you ask his advice opening your heart to him. But if an enemy enters, you immediately throw the paper away into the desk and try to dissemble. So this world is made up of two sorts of entities one friendly and the other unfriendly. When you come in contact with friendly things you open yourself to it. Hence it follows that I show out my true nature when friendly things come to me, and I dissemble when unfriendly things approach me. So all unhappiness is outside myself and all happiness inside me. Happiness is the birth-right of the spirit, and misery is the nature of matter ; matter creates ignorance, and ignorance is the root of

all misery ; matter makes the spirit think itself to be finite, although it is infinite. Matter is restless and spirit eternally calm. In calmness alone, there is happiness and where there is no calmness there is misery. And when does calmness leave him ? When he forgets his nature. And when does it come to him ? When he remains within himself. The secret is now found out; and I must go back within myself, to find out the bliss. The Kingdom of Heaven is within me and not outside. The more I can dive deep within myself, the more I shall be able to come near to my true nature. So man must give up his external contact and learn his real nature. A study of this is known as Vedanta. The word Vedanta means, the seed of all knowledge. The word may have several meanings,—the last portion of the Veda, the end and aim of all Veda or the end of all knowledge—Veda meaning knowledge, from the root *Vid*. *Vid* has many meanings. One of them is to know. Hence Veda is knowledge. What is knowledge ? Knowledge presupposes the knower and the known,—the union of the knower and the known, is knowledge. So knowledge is the root of all miseries. I must give up, altogether, the knowledge of the Universe. The moment I separate myself from the universe, I can realize my happiness. “He finds out that when that which is beyond hearing, touch, taste, smell and sound,

beyond egoism and mind is reached, then alone the abode of Bliss, that ideal food which my soul hankers after, can be realized." He begins to rebel against the world. Hitherto, he was a loving father, loving brother, loving husband and what not, but he no longer wants any contact with the family. The moment he comes away from the world, the wife and children, are no longer his. They are God's; because he could not make one hair in the head of the child. Then how could he take credit of being the child's father? In Gita, it is said—Oh Arjuna, you should know that I am also lust for those that are lustful. When you are overpowered by lust, in fact it is I that come in contact with wife. With thoughts like these, he gives up the universe altogether to the real proprietor. Now, nothing remains for him. He must sit in a quiet place and try to go within himself and there is considerable struggle. This Atman can never be realized by the weak-minded. Two or three months' trial won't do. If he has intense desire to realize it, he can get it sooner. He should not give it up in the middle. When he is able to go within himself, he will be able gradually to eliminate those limiting tendencies which do not allow him to know his real nature. He will have to give up this *Jnanamayakosha*, *Annamayakosha* &c. Mind is

only material and not spiritual. In the Upanishads there is a nice proof.

Swetaketu was taught by his father that this mind is made up of food ; that it is food-born. Swetaketu could not understand it. His father then asked him to take only half meal next day, diminishing the quantity thereafter day by day. Gradually on the 15th day, Swetaketu became so weak that when asked by the father to repeat his lessons, he could hardly say, ' Father, I am so weak that I cannot repeat ; I seem to have forgotten everything.' "Then my child", says the father, "take some milk and refresh yourself and then see if you can remember. The boy did so, and was able to repeat everything. Hence food enables mind to retain things in its memory, and so it is food-born. And therefore it is purely material. What is mind? Mind is that which feels and wills. The verbs *to feel* and *to will* are transitive and they require objects. Matter is the object. Without this material the universe of the mind cannot exist and the universe is only a collection of objects. So, analysing mind, you find out that it is purely material, and the intellect is also material and the *anandam* being contact born, that is also material. So, until man, by constant practice, is able to separate himself completely from whatever is material, it is impossible for him to realize that ideal. By study.

ing the Vedas, by reasoning properly he may for sometime go in search of that highest ideal within himself. But so long as he has the material bondage, he cannot realize it. Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to give us a nice illustration of a mungoose. When a mungoose is not perfectly tamed, it is tied to a chain attached to a weight. When it is frightened it cannot go out of the compound but runs up to the wall, there feeling quite secure. But it won't be there for long, on account of the weight drawing it downwards. Similarly when a man gets frightened with the world he wants to go home (heaven). But he cannot remain there for long on account of his tendencies. Hence if the weight, the inclination, is got rid of, then he can live for ever there. And Bhagavan says, "He who is gone beyond all ideas of duty and he who is perfectly satisfied with himself, he who finds perfection out of himself, that man alone has gone beyond Karma." He is no longer defective. He finds that he is perfect. Food does not make him live. "He does not require the sun to shine for him. He does not need the moon to illumine for him. He does not require their help. On the other hand, he gives them luminosity." Again, the lamp is burning as long as I see. If I close my eyes where is the light? If the Atman, I, is here, then the lamp can burn, the

same can shine. If I am not there nothing can shine, if I am not there, nothing can exist for me. The phenomenal universe itself is a non-entity to me. With the self alone, anything can exist. Say, the sun is shining, the luminosity is not an elementary thing itself. It is not self-existent. It is a compound. I must exist with it and their union alone can result in the brilliancy. That is all.

The moment a man separates himself from matter, he becomes formless. What is a form? Form or figure is something bounded by lines, occupying a space, and as such is finite. So, when he becomes formless he is infinite. And when he realizes his infinite nature, he is all in all, everything. He is rid of the finite body, and, he becomes all-knowing, because his nature is to know. Then he is perfectly happy. There is no hungering after any knowledge any more. All his doubts have been cleared. He is perfectly satisfied. The goal of Vedanta is reached. The man has come back home. He has realized that Bliss, which knows no limit, which is beyond everything, and in which all this universe is merged. If he then wants to come out of the body, he can do it. "He perceives that he himself is all things. In him alone all things, in him alone all these are. His previous self and the present self are

diametrically opposite. *Aham Brahmasmi*, refers only to the finite self. But he has reached the *Parabrahman* which is infinite.

"When a man is deluded by egoism, he thinks that he alone is the worker." And it is this *ahamkara* that was a barrier in his way. It is now destroyed.

Hence to get rid of that pride—*ahamkara*, you must exert yourself hard. "You must awake, arise and search the feet of saints, who have realized the truth, and thus alone realize the truth."

EDUCATION. THAT WAS IMPARTED IN KURUKSHETRA

IN that vast expansive field of holy Kurukshetra stand the warring battalions of both the Kurus and Pandavas, drawn up ready for engagement. Now, Arjuna, the mighty bowman asks his divine charioteer to place his chariot in the midst of the fields. Coming thither, he beholds all the warriors of both the parties, his own kinsmen, standing ready to kill or die. The sight strikes the weaker chord of his heart and he becomes full with the note of morbid pity and fear. He thinks that killing so many people and his own kinsmen for the sake of a kingdom is a sin, and being frightened by that, he feels almost inclined not to fight. He forgets his own purpose ; he thinks that the throne is the real purpose of the battle ; but he thinks not that, as a Kshatriya, it is his imperative duty to fight for the cause of righteousness against the unrighteous. Yudhishthira is the lawful heir to the throne, but Duryodhana has usurped it. In his reign all wicked men succeed against the good ones, because the king supports them ; and it is the holy duty of every Kshatriya to prevent this state of affairs. The wicked Duryodhana is so inexorable that he refuses to cede to Yudisthira even ' that

much of land which could be covered by the point of a needle.' Yudhisthira is so good that he is ready to be satisfied even with five villages for the five brothers, but Duryodhana would not give, and Krishna has failed to bring peace between them. Under these circumstances, Arjuna has been called to arms and as a Kshatriya it is his duty to fight. But now he is overtaken by a sort of morbid pity which has originated from selfishness. He is thinking of 'My relations', 'My Kingdom,'. He does not realize that he has raised the sword not for himself but for all; so he is really moved by selfishness. He wants to be happy with all his friends and relations, and so thinks of his happiness only. But here he is to fight as a Kshatriya for Dharma, for a righteous cause—this he forgets, 'The man who dies for a righteous cause goes to Heaven.'

To correct this terrible mistake of Arjuna and show him his path of duty, his Dharma, comes out now the Blessed Lord with all His Divine lore. He thunders into the ears of Arjuna, "Shake off this cowardice, Oh mighty hero; ill doth it become thee. Thou shouldest have a better knowledge of the Self than this. Look now to the Dharma and not to the false selfish enjoyment. Let not thee think of profit and loss; but duty, Dharma, alone should be thy ideal. To work thou hast the right, and not to the fruits thereof."

It may be questioned here, why should not man work for happiness? Every movement of life is to search out some happiness, some bliss ; for it is a fact that the Atman which is inhabiting these bodies, is of the nature of Bliss itself. The Soul has lost its natural condition, and it is constantly trying to regain its lost state. Happiness is expansion, misery is contraction. Put a little sugar on the tongue, at once it expands and we have a pleasurable sensation. Put something bitter, it contracts and we feel discomfort. Whenever there is expansion, there is the feeling of happiness ; whenever there is contraction, there is misery. Contraction means more limitation, more bondage, more want, so it brings misery ; and its opposite is expansion which causes happiness. Through Maya the contraction comes. That power shuts the Soul up in a finite body—either of a god, or of a man or of an animal. If therefore every soul seeks to expand itself, why should not Arjuna care for enjoyment ?

We have lost the real enjoyment of bliss on account of this limited body, on account of having forgotten our infinite nature. When a dog regards himself a dog, he thinks he is as big as that body, a few feet in length. So, when man not knowing the real infinitude of his inner Spirit imagines that he is a being only three and a half cubits in length,

he sets all his heart to satisfy that little self alone regarding it to be the real fulfilment of the bliss of inner soul. But although he may imagine this for births after births, for ages and ages—yes, even if all these people imagine themselves as finite, still the infinite will never become finite. *You* may commit this blunder ; your *teacher* cannot. So the scriptures say : Give up these little pleasures of this world. They can never give you enjoyment. As a wheel turns, so does the wheel of pleasure and pain revolve—sometimes pleasure comes up, sometimes pain. If both the antecedence and sequence of this pleasure are pain, it cannot but be pain, only it may come in the guise of pleasure. A fish is hooked by a sweet bait, only to be taken out of water, killed, dressed and cooked. So these pleasures are but baits thrown out into the waters of life to hook us all up to be consumed by that all-devouring Death.

The more you identify yourselves with the sense pleasures, the more you will have to die ; for such identification will tag you more closely with the body that is sure to perish. So this is not really the path of happiness for you. Any amount of material wealth, cannot gain the real happiness for man though he strives in vain for it through that means. In real life we see, persons commanding all the material resources such as wealth

health etc.,—that could have brought them the real happiness had they had the power to do so,—are equally dissatisfied and want more like the poor beggar who has nothing. This is a strong proof that material things cannot satisfy man. This innate dissatisfaction of his soul shows that this so called human nature is not natural to him. He hates his finiteness. In no condition of life does he find satisfaction, he feels himself as if out of his element. How can satisfaction be found in this world of wants and limitations? Where then can we find the permanent solace of life? We must turn to the Teacher again and hear Him proclaim : “Blessed are those that renounce all sense pleasures, for they shall realize their immortal nature; they shall taste the undying joy of the Soul.”

Thus the philosophy of higher life commands us to give up all the pleasures of earth and heaven, because they are stricken with pain. But it is not always easy to do that. We are not always ripe for renunciation. If a man be still under the sway of ignorance, if he still clings to the sensual pleasures, how can he then renounce? He may recognise intellectually that this is the ideal, but he may not be able to act up to it. There must be steps by which he may rise. So Sri Krishna says again: Only those who have weighed in the balance, the world

with all its pleasures and found it wanting, are ready for renunciation. You Arjuna are not yet ripe for it. Only Sadhus and Sannyasins can understand this teaching; but because you are not so much developed, I will give you another method, better adapted to you. I give you the path of Karma. Karma is the cause of our bondage; through this Karma you can also reach freedom. I will teach you how by handling the Karma, you can free yourself. The path I am going to describe to you is a very grand path, for even a little of this will bring you immense good, will make you free from the bondage of life. Nothing will thwart your course or disturb your mind. There is no fear in this path. Your aim will not be baffled. You will even overcome the morbid fear of death, which has now taken possession of your heart so ignominiously.

Whence comes fear? It springs from the idea of death, of losing something we hold very near and dear to our heart and it is based on egotism. Fear is always based on the sense of our little embodied 'I'. But Krishna says, 'I will point out a path to you by taking which you will lose all fear.' When you do not work on your own account, for your self-aggrandizement, then this egotism will be thrown out. So let you not look for the fruits of your work. If you can work with this attitude of mind that yours is only to work and not the fruits

thereof, they all belonging to some one else, then you will neither suffer nor enjoy. Let the Lord have all the fruits of your Karma. Make Him the centre of your actions and not your self, and thus alone can you get yourself freed from the gripping shackles of fear. If you are too much filled with your egotism, you always fear. So long as you think that this table does not belong to you, you do not care if something happens to it; but if you think that it is yours, then every scratch, every little speck of dust on it troubles you. With the sense of 'mine' comes the sense of fear. The moment you throw out all idea of 'mine,' you lose all fear. So the path of Karma tells you merely to do your duty, for then only the idea of egotism will be destroyed and with it also all fear, pain and pleasure of life.

Work you must. Fighting is inevitable for you. Your very nature will goad you to action. Man works to fight against poverty, to fight against ignorance, and to fight against defeat. Every work is a fight in this world. But if you regard pleasure and pain, profit and loss, and victory and defeat—all alike, and then fight, no harm will befall you. Regard all sense-pleasures only as misery. If with a heart full of renunciation, you go on working, then you will not fall into misery. If you wish to work in the world, this is the only method which when followed is able to cut the fetters of your

Karma. Be equanimous to both pain and pleasure. This equanimity of mind towards all the dual expression of life is known as Yoga. And the Lord Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna, and through him the whole humanity, to fight, to give battle to the unrighteous, to the unholy, to the enemy of our progress in life, without fear or remorse, being steadfast in that Yoga. Thus struggling, fighting with the enemies, internal as well as external, doing the duties of life just for their own sake, without caring for the results, without attachment, keeping the heart always on the Lord, on you proceed in the path of life, O man! till you reach the goal.

BOOK TWO

ENDS AND ENDS

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेय-

स्ते उभे नानार्थे पुरुषं सिनीतः ।

तयोः श्रेय भाददानस्य

साधु भवति हीयतेऽर्थाच्च उ प्रेयो वृणीते ॥

कठोपनिषद् । २.१

One thing is the good and (quite) different indeed is the pleasant ; having been of different requisitions, they both bind the Purusha. Good befalls him who follows the good, but loses he the goal, who chooses the pleasant.

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेत-

स्तौ सम्परीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।

श्रेयो हि धीरोऽभिप्रेयसो वृणीते

प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमाद् वृणीते ॥

कठोपनिषद् । २.२

Both the good and the pleasant approach man ; the wise one discriminates the two having examined them (well). Yea, the wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the fool chooses the pleasant through avarice and attachment.

THE TWO POLES OF EXISTENCE

THERE are two opposite poles in life. What is night to those who cling to this world is day to the wise man ; and what is day to the worldly-minded is night to the Sage. What the ordinary man, absorbed in material concerns, regards to be good, the man of spiritual vision sees as bad. What tempts the one, repels the other. That is, their minds are diametrically opposite in their points of view. The man of the world thinks that only in the world can he find happiness. Therefore he is constantly struggling to amass and utilize the good things of this earth. If he sees anyone who is living wholly on the inside, he believes him to be deluded and altogether in the wrong. The Sage, on the contrary, knows that there is no bliss whatever on the outside. He has learned by experience that matter breeds misery and that Spirit breeds happiness.

Mind is not altogether matter, nor is it altogether Spirit. It is a mixture of both ; therefore in all our mental impressions and perceptions we must have the combined effect of the two. This is why with the mind we cannot see Spirit ; nor can we wholly lose sight of it. Whenever we taste any happiness, we may always be sure it comes from Spirit ; while

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Mind is not altogether matter, nor is it altogether Spirit. It is a mixture of both ; therefore in all our mental impressions and perceptions we must have the combined effect of the two. This is why with the mind we cannot see Spirit ; nor can we wholly lose sight of it. Whenever we taste any happiness, we may always be sure it comes from Spirit ; while

when we are unhappy, we may know that the cause is to be found in matter. This creates a bitter-sweet ; and that is what life is. The bitter comes from the material side of our nature, the sweet from the spiritual side. The more the material side predominates over the spiritual, the more miserable must we be ; if we would escape from our misery, we must work hard to give a preponderant place to Spirit. In the man of the world the material factor has been cultivated at the expense of the spiritual. In the Sage the spiritual outweighs the material.

The man of the world seeks all his satisfaction in material pleasures and external acquisition ; but the Sage has discovered that to go outside is to lose his happiness. He expects all his happiness to come from inside himself ; while the worldly man expects it to come from outside himself. The ordinary human being is full of anxieties and troubles ; but the man who keeps himself intact within himself, has no anxiety about material things and he can be peaceful. When we open our mind to these worldly worries, each asks us to be mindful of it and no room is left for mindfulness of the Soul. But Wisdom says to us : If you wish to be happy, if you wish to be wise, if you wish to be strong, never let the world take you. The boat may be in the water, but the water must not be in the boat ;

so we may be in the world, but the world must not be in us. Why should we admit these worldly disturbances inside of us? Why do we allow darkness to enter? Lust, greed and all our disquietudes are generated by lack of true knowledge; and they come when the veil of matter hides the Soul.

If we search at the bottom of all our miseries, we shall find that they are based on our material nature. When Spirit dominates, we may live in the midst of the world, but nothing will disturb us. And why should we let these things affect us? Naked we came from our mother's womb, naked shall we go out of life. We shall not be able to take one bone of our body with us. As a man who works in the government mint may handle thousands of rupees and act like a millionaire, but when he goes out, he is searched lest he takes a pie with him, so the whole world belongs to the Governor of the Universe, and we can bring nothing in when we come, nor can we carry anything away when we go. If we constantly remember this, we shall realize how foolish we are to base all our happiness on bodily pleasures and bodily conditions.

How does the world get inside of us? It enters when we begin to think 'All this is mine.' The more we feel the 'me' and 'mine', the more we take the world inside. The more we cultivate the

'not mine,' the more will the world be kept outside. This is the secret of overcoming the world. If we want to get rid of anxiety, fear, unrest, there is but one way, to develop the spiritual factor in us. The true Sage is not moved by the good and bad of this world; he does not measure his happiness by external conditions, nor does he count his life by the few years he spends in this one body. There was a great Sage, called the Hairy Sage because of the number of hairs on his body. He was in the habit of spending a few days under this tree, then a few days under another tree. Once Narada came to him and said: "My dear friend, all Sages have hermitages; why do you not have one?" The Hairy Sage replied: "You see, my life is so short, it is not worthwhile." "Why, are you going to die, soon?" Narada asked. "Do you see the number of hairs on my body?" was the Sage's answer, "so many years shall I live."

To him this life was nothing, because his mind was directed towards eternity; and compared with eternity even seventy thousand cycles appear infinitesimally short. When we study Geography, we read of so many mountains and rivers, that we feel we cannot even count them all; but when we open a book on Astronomy, all the mountains and rivers vanish and this earth becomes a point without length, breadth or magnitude. In the same way,

when we think only of this life, all the concerns of the world seem very important to us ; but when we think of eternity, these outer things seem as nothing. This is the reason why it is so difficult for the man of the world and the wise man to understand each other.

Vedanta, however, never teaches us to run away from the world. It says rather : "Do not be a coward and run away. Stay in the world, but in the world be a Sage. If you wish, you may even be a householder, with many cares and occupations, but be a Sage at the same time. Do not give up work. Stay and work in the office of God, this universe, knowing that all is His, not yours. Never forget that this body, this house, all these people who surround you, belong to God. You, also, do not belong to yourself ; you belong to God." The one who can feel that he can call nothing his own, that he is truly 'poor in spirit,' he becomes the richest of men, and in him, we may know, Spirit has triumphed over matter.

THE TWO PATHS

MAN is a born fighter against Nature. Wherever he turns, Nature stands against him, thwarting him, harassing him and often worsting him. He wants to know all, to see all, to hear all, to enjoy all, but there is ever an impenetrable, impassable wall circumscribing his desire. Still, man struggles on and hopes that the day will come when Nature will fall at his feet and acknowledge him her supreme master. The world is a huge battlefield, not a vast drawing-room, and the struggle for mastery between man and Nature has been going on since time immemorial.

This struggle is what is called civilisation; and that nation which struggles with the greatest success is the most civilised. The savage does not question the authority of Nature; he is content to accept her terms. But the more civilised man has obtained some measure of success; he lives in a house, wears clothes, cooks his food, &c., in opposition to Nature's decree.

Two great civilisations have evolved out of this ceaseless warfare: the civilisation of the West and the civilisation of the East. The goal of both is the same—the conquest of Nature—but the paths are different. Let us see which path can lead us to victory, and which cannot.

The West starts from the hypothesis that there are two separate entities here: Man with his desires and the universe outside him which satisfies those desires. The Westerner sees that the universe is beautifully fit to serve his ends. He wants to enjoy the universe and it supplies him with all his sense-hankerings; he wants to know, and there is the book of Nature laid open before him. Nature is here to satisfy him, to serve him. He is the master, and Nature is his slave. Let him but know how to command her, and power and knowledge will be his. Western genius has therefore been employed in the analysis of Nature. As to his own existence, he entertains not a shadow of doubt; that is self-evident truth. Are not his body and mind working and thinking, desiring and enjoying, and what sane man can doubt their reality? The question, "Who am I?" seldom occurs to him; and if it is put to him, the answer is ready, "I am an American", "I am an European".

The Man of the West is therefore scientific. He wants to know what the universe is composed of, and chemistry has been evolved; wants to know what forces go to keep it together, and physics has been evolved; wants to pry into the secrets of the heavens, and astronomy has been evolved; wants to be rid of disease, and medical and surgical sciences have been evolved; and so on.

Nature was conquered at every step and forced to yield her treasures! He has analysed Nature and his labour has not gone in vain. All the multifarious conveniences of modern life are due to that patient toil. And no one will deny that the results are grand.

But has all this led him any nearer the Truth? Has it enabled him to solve the mystery of existence, to read the riddle of the universe? Has it brought everlasting peace and life to him? Can it ever do?

Let us take his own conclusions. He has demonstrated that matter is indestructible, and that the whole universe is composed of matter. In other words, the universe has neither beginning nor end, either in time or space. It is infinite and eternal. And what is man? Is he not very finite? A three-and-a-half cubit form, with senses and mind not by any means perfect, and a short span of life; is he not indeed finite? True, he has multiplied the power of his senses, a hundred, a thousand-fold. He can see far into space through his telescope; he can cover, if he pleases, hundreds of miles a day. But however fast he may go, however far he may see, an infinite beyond is always before him. His knowledge, wide and wonderful as it is, does but confirm his infinite limitations; for, finiteness, be it magnified ever so much, is but infinitesimally small compared with infinity.

But it may be said that though the individual man is finite, the human race is infinite, and therefore the accumulated experience of ages will at last make man the all-knowing and all-powerful master of the universe. This argument is apparently convincing, but looking into it a little carefully, it is found to be utterly futile. In the first place, what has man learnt from the immense past? What has it brought him to? He knows to day, more than ever before, that there is infinitely more to know. And how is he going to cover this yet unknown infinite? Where is the stop to the progress of knowledge, seeing that knowledge is infinite? It is impossible, it is inconceivable that finite man shall ever be able to stand up and say, "The infinite universe is at my feet. I leave this heritage to the generation of mankind to come."

The so-called scientific civilisation of the West is therefore bound to be ever-progressing, ever moving on to newer fields of beauty and power, but the culmination, the perfection can never come. The struggle can never cease, and the victory never be won.

Let us turn now to the path of the East. It begins by questioning the man himself. Why should it be assumed that the whole universe is for man's enjoyment? that he is distinct and separate from the universe? What is *he* made up of? Is not his

body also made up of matter and his mind too? Food maintains the body as well as the mind; disease affects them both. The mind is as material as the body, only it is finer. What then is that which makes the mind think, the senses perceive, and the body move? The chair here does not move, and the table does not think. Why? They too are material? Where is the difference, then, between man and the dull universe around him? By any manipulation of matter, can intelligent life be produced?

Such questions were asked. The enquiry was made subjective, and not objective as in the West. And are not the results of subjective inquiry bound to be far safer than those of the objective method? Is it not folly to try to understand the subject through the object? Is not all objective knowledge bound to be imperfect? Without knowing the knower, can the known be ever known? Here in the East too the mistake was made, which the West clings to, even now, as the only safe path. But the Aryan sages soon discovered their mistake, and giving up the search in external nature, turned their energies inward for self-analysis. They saw that Self-knowledge was the only knowledge worth having, the only science worth evolving, and all other pursuits—the modern scientific pursuits, were left to the less analytic minds, to the lower castes.

That is why in India we find that our architects, surgeons, traders, agriculturists, artists &c., belong to the lower castes. The Brahmana is he who seeks Atma-jnana.

And he found that he is the Spirit within, which makes the body and mind act and think. It is the Spirit behind the body and mind that distinguishes it from other material objects in the universe. Body and mind are instruments in the hands of the Spirit. That spirit is the subject, the 'I' in man, and the universe is the object and these instruments are the verb. These three together make the complete and harmonious sentence of Life. The Spirit peers through the senses into the world, just as the astronomer sees the far-off star through his telescope, and as the Spirit is by its nature infinite, the infinite universe can withhold no secret from its gaze.

Therefore man has to realise his infinite nature, to see that he is Spirit and not either body or mind, before he can gain victory in the great struggle. He has to go beyond the body and beyond the mind to reach this realisation and to stand victorious.

It is easy to see that none but the ignorant or the animal man will care to live in the body alone. Most of us live both in the body and mind, though perhaps considerably more in the body than in the mind. But the intellectual man, the poets, painters

and philosophers of the world live mostly in their minds. And the Sages live in the Spirit.

They have realised that the body and mind are prison houses in which the Spirit is bound, and unless these go, Freedom will never come. These walls dim the lustre of the effulgent Spirit, just as a black paper around this dome will make this class-room dark. But is it not impossible to go beyond the body and mind ? Will that not mean death ? No. Every day of your lives you are going into that devoutly-to-be-wished-for state when you are in deep sleep. You are perfectly unconscious. The world with its joys and miseries has vanished for you. You behave in every respect like a dead man ; you do not move, you do not think, feel or will. But sleep is not death, because the Spirit is there. A push or call brings you back to consciousness, and you remember everything you did before sleep, and, mark this, that you enjoyed a sound sleep. You are conscious that you were unconscious for a time. This memory or consciousness, would be impossible unless you had experienced it. So it is possible to go beyond the body and mind. But you do it in a fit of overpowering sleep, and therefore are none the wiser, while the Jnani does it consciously and therefore becomes all-knowing and all-conquering.

The Sages of the East have thus realised their Self and conquered Nature, and therefore their

civilisation is perfect. Theirs is the Path to Victory.

But the children of those great Sages have forgotten their spiritual nature, and even think themselves more helpless than the children of the Scientific West. For, the European or the American believes in himself, has immense faith in his own energy and resource, and this faith in himself, in the irresistible power of the Spirit within, is at the root of all his success. But we have lost faith in ourselves. We imitate. But imitation can never make man a victor. Let us revive the old, strong, pure faith in the power and glory of the Spirit ; let us remind ourselves that we are Spirits unconquerable, all-knowing ; let us remember that Matter is the servant of Spirit, not Spirit the servant of Matter ; let us tread the Path which the Sages trod and follow their foot-prints ; and then, indeed, we shall see that the civilisation evolved by the Aryan Sages, our great forefathers, is alone perfect, and that their Path is alone the path to victory in the great battle of Life.

HEAVEN AND TRUE HAPPINESS

WHenever any exertion is made the end is happiness. Happiness is the goal of all living beings, animals and men. But the ordinary happiness of the world will never satisfy man. Nowhere in creation can he find lasting satisfaction, not even if he rises to the highest Heaven. Only when he has gone beyond all the Heavens can he hope to escape from the revolving wheel of birth and death. What is Heaven? It is not a place where man realises his perfect nature. My Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to tell us that there are chains of iron and chains of gold, but both are chains and they bind. Heaven is the chain of gold which binds man and does not allow him true freedom in any way. Yet when man puts the question to himself whether he wants to be a slave or to be free, the answer always comes that he wants to be free. A slave is never happy, for at every moment he is at the command of the master; and just when he is enjoying most, he may be called away to do something else. But if we are not free in Heaven, why should we seek it? Is there no other way by which we can find freedom? Vedanta says 'Yes'; and it shows us how we may attain, not an impermanent Heaven, but everlasting blissfulness.

Sense pleasure, even the highest, can never be eternal, because all the senses are perishable. For this reason pleasures that come through the senses are invariably accompanied by fear of loss and that spoils all real enjoyment. Man runs after sense pleasure because he does not know that he has within himself all happiness. His desire is based on ignorance and whatever is based on ignorance we should avoid. If we study the different descriptions of Heaven, we readily see that it is only a place of continued festivities or enjoyments. Therefore Heaven should never be our ideal, for the Scriptures tell us that we must overcome all desire for enjoyment, whether in this world or in the next. Salvation does not consist in going to Heaven. It consists in realising that 'I am God's child,' if I am a dualist; or that 'I am one with God,' if I am a monist. So long as happiness is sought in that which perishes, it will never be found. Happiness is in you. You take a sweetmeat because you think that in eating it you will be happy; yet the enjoyment that comes from it is not in it, but in you. You seek that which harmonises with your nature; you try to avoid that which does not harmonise. When you find something that harmonises, you say you are happy; when you come in contact with something that does not harmonise, you feel unhappy.

Man is a combination of matter and spirit. Matter, because it is limited and changeable, breeds unhappiness; and when man's material nature asserts itself, he becomes unhappy. When, on the contrary, he is able to detach himself from his material being by discovering his true nature, then matter has no more power over him and nothing can make him unhappy. It was thus that Christ could pray for His enemies when on the cross. Those who reach this state never get angry, they never wish to do harm to anyone; they even regard those who injure them as friends. If you study yourself, you will find that you are naturally happy. It is because you mistake your nature that you become unhappy. Instead of identifying yourself with spirit, you have identified yourself with matter, with your bodily conditions, and for that reason you feel yourself miserable and unfortunate. To save you from this mistake the Great Teachers all try to make you realise that you are pure and perfect.

Man is a curious mixture and this is the cause of the many struggles through which he has to pass. If you put a lion and a bull in the same cage--the one carnivorous, the other herbivorous--they will fight until one or the other is killed. So the lion and the bull in man make constant strife, which will end only when spirit has completely overcome matter.

When man will free himself entirely from the thralldom of body and mind, then alone will he know true happiness. Nothing in the universe will ever be able to shake him then, because he will have risen above fear and desire. How many gallons of water are poured into the ocean in a day, yet it remains the same. So no matter how many bow down before such a man, no matter how many may persecute him, it will make no impression on him ; he will remain unmoved.

In order to attain this state, you must practise self-purification. By discrimination you must distinguish the real from the unreal. You must not be credulous. You must examine and analyze for yourself and separate right from wrong. Then you must take the right and throw away the wrong. If you will observe the world and yourself, you will find out that all are constantly changing, even your body and mind. The body changes perceptibly, mind also ; but you do not change. When you look within, you see that the 'I' who was a schoolboy, then a youth, then a man, has not changed ; so you have come to know that whereas the body's nature changes and the mind's nature, your nature does not change. Thus by careful observation you learn that you are the only changeless entity in all this changing world. So long, however, as you identify yourself with the body and mind, you must also

change; because through this identification you have become one with the world, the mind and the body.

Your duty is to realise through discrimination that you are above change, above death, indestructible; for by doing this you will attain freedom. Freedom is your home towards which you have been struggling through many lives. But as when a man wishes to make a railway journey, he must have money to pay for his ticket, so when you would go to this home, you must have six sorts of wealth or practise six kinds of purification. You must learn to control the senses and the mind; you must be willing to be ill-treated, vilified, persecuted—you must not covet enjoyment and you must have unwavering faith and be steadfast in devotion. By these means you will surely reach the goal. We all have within us the power to discriminate between what will bring happiness and what will bring misery; and this power is the only thing worth having. If a man has wealth and has not discrimination, he will not know how to spend his money intelligently and it may only make him miserable. If a man has learning and lacks discrimination, he will not know how to use his knowledge wisely. But if a man has the discriminative faculty and nothing else, he is still the most fortunate of men, because through it he may attain the loftiest ends,

Buddha's renunciation was the result of the highest discrimination. He found that to go out of the world brought the truest happiness. When he discovered that this earthly life was beset with miseries, disease and death, he said: "Better no life at all than such a life. If life means something which continues in misery to ultimately ends in death, rather let me throw such a life away." It was because he had realised the hollowness and transitoriness of worldly joys that he was able to give up his kingdom and become a mendicant. He could no longer rest satisfied in his palace. Earthly power and wealth meant nothing to him. He preferred to go out and seek the higher power, enduring hunger, thirst, privations of every kind to gain his end. Nothing could shake him, because he was determined to know the Truth. It only shows that man can do anything, if only he has sufficient determination. During that night of final struggle, in the first part *Mara* tried to terrify him; in the second part he appealed to his softer nature by assuming the form of his weeping father, his weeping wife, his helpless child; in the third part he passed through all the heavens and was offered all the powers, but he threw them all aside. Then he went to *Brahma-loka* or the highest Heaven, and in the last part of the night he attained *Nirvana* or complete illumination.

How was he able to remain firm through all these temptations? By never losing his power of discrimination; he never mistook the unreal for the real. Even the delights of the of the highest heaven could not turn him away from his desire to know the Truth. As long as we work for any reward whatever, even to go to heaven, we cannot attain freedom, for we are still under the sway of ego. But if we can realise that God is all in all and everything else is nothing, then liberation comes easily. For what keeps us from seeing God? Our ego. Egotism is the real hell-fire. The more we can minimize it, the nearer we shall approach the goal. If we can throw it away altogether, then freedom is ours. Therefore the more we can fix our mind on God and forget ourselves and our little desires for enjoyment either here or hereafter, the more quickly shall we reach freedom. There are two ways of going to Heaven; the one is by death, the other by spiritual realisation. A man, both by living and by dying, can go to Heaven. As the ripe cocoanut separates itself from the shell, so if we can learn the secret of separating our Divine Self from all bodily attachments and selfish desires, then we can realize the highest Heaven even in this life.

RENUNCIATION AND FREEDOM

It is because we are mistaking the real for the unreal, the unreal for the real, that all this human life seems so serious to us. We are mistaking the play to be the real thing and the Player to be unreal; whereas God is the only reality and apart from Him all this creation is absolutely unreal. If you will analyse your own life, you will find its utter hollowness. A birth, a death, and a little space between. Out of darkness you have come, into darkness you will go again, and you call this little space between, life. There was no dream, then you dreamed, and again there was no dream. That dream you call unreal; but this life is just as unreal, just as much of a dream as that. At any moment death may call you away. A man builds a fine house, confident that he will enjoy it for many years; yet the day he enters it, he may go out of it for ever.

When Yudhisthira was asked: "What is the most wonderful thing in the world?" he replied: "Every day men are dying all around, yet every man believes that he will be an exception to the rule." A man thinks, "At least I shall live for fifty years"; and when those fifty years are over, he says "I shall surely live for fifty years more." Yet he may die to-morrow. Nevertheless he goes on earning and

planning as if he were to live forever. Faith in God is the only wealth. A man thinks that if he gets more money he will be happier, but he is only more miserable. Only the man who depends on himself has reason to fear all the wants and dangers of the world. The man who has perfect faith in the Lord is never in want or danger.

As long as you are held by any one of these senses, as long as you care for good food or sweet sounds or beautiful sights, you cannot hope to fix your mind on God. You will have to go out of the creation ; you will have to turn your thoughts away from these outer things. And when you go out of creation where must you go ? To the Creator. These senses are like so many poisons. You know that there are different kinds of poison. Some, like cynide of potassium, kill instantaneously ; others kill more slowly—in a day or a week or a month ; and there are some which kill only after many years. Sensuality is a poison which kills after many years. Man is immortal, he cannot die ; yet this slavery to the senses kills him again and again.

We are all caught in the meshes of creation. This world is a huge web and *Maya* is the spider. Until we escape from it, we shall have to be born again and again ; and every time the spider will be waiting for you and will weave a new web of sense life about you. Light the fire of wisdom in your

heart and it will burn up the whole web and destroy the spider too, if it dares approach you. But when that fire is lighted, it will not dare come near you.

My Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to say : "All this is unreal, Thou alone art real." This universe is unreal. This body is unreal, this life is unreal ; the only reality in this universe is God. But until you have realised the hollowness of this world and your own utter helplessness, you cannot hope to know that Reality. Until you realise the emptiness of everything here, your desire for the world will not cease. A fruit-vendor comes with some mangoes. They look very delicious and you want them. But if you find out that they are sour, at once your desire for them dies. So, only when you have learned that this whole world is sour, hollow, unsatisfying, will you give it up. You must know it for what it is, then you will at once throw it away. Christ knew the hollowness of this little life and so he could easily give it up for eternal life. That was the reason why He preached "He who loseth his life shall find it ;" that is he who loseth this temporary life of the body shall find eternal life. He wanted infinite life, not the poor little life of this world. Infinite life means God.

It is not possible for a man to attain salvation all at once, except in very rare instances. There are

so many subtle ways in which this *Maya* can take hold of us. A man may renounce but then he becomes a *Guruji* (teacher) or he thinks himself a great lecturer ! Of course, a man can attain salvation by the special grace of God. If he can realise that God is all in all and that he himself is nothing, then *Mukti* or freedom comes easily. For what keeps us from seeing God? Our egotism. The more we can minimize it, the nearer we shall approach the goal. If we can throw it away altogether, then *Mukti* is ours. Therefore, the more we can fix our mind on God and forget ourselves, the more quickly shall we reach freedom.

SELF - ABNEGATION AND REALIZATION

WITHOUT absolute self-abnegation no one can realise God. You must know that you are utterly powerless, worthless, that of yourself you can do nothing. Until you recognise this, the realisation of God will not come. You may regard yourself to be a learned scholar, to be healthy, to be rich, to be an honourable man; but all this is merely a phantasm. The time is near at hand when you will be disabused of this idea. Your health may be destroyed, your riches swept away, your social standing may be impaired. Or if you keep them, you will begin to say to yourself: "I have wealth, but perhaps that man who is poor is better off than I because he has health; or I have health, social position, but there is a person who seems happier than I without them."

If a man has the power to see things as they should be seen, to analyze himself properly, to analyze his mind properly, he will understand that he is absolutely in the hands of a Power who uses him as He pleases and whom he is powerless to resist. Then he says: "When man's vanity is puffed up by beauty, name, wealth, fame, he has no hope to reach Thee, O Lord! Thou art the property of those who have none else to call their own. Thou belongest to the poor, the lowly, to those

who have nothing in this world. Therefore come to me, O Lord ! All that I have is Thine. It never was mine. Thou art all my wealth ! ”

Health, wealth, beauty, property are really not friendly to man. They rather mislead him. They may seem to bring him happiness for a time ; but at last he will have to confess that although he knows what is right he has no power to do it ; that he is too weak to lift himself up. Hence self-surrender is the only path for him. So he gives himself up entirely to the Lord. And in so doing, he is really not the loser. He actually gains, for he is a person who commits all sorts of blunders, while God never commits a blunder. If he directs himself, where will he go ? To the grave yard, to the cremation ground. But the one who is guided by God knows that there is no death for him. He understands himself to be self-luminous, self-existent ; sword cannot cut him, fire cannot burn him, water cannot wet him, air cannot dry him ; he is birthless, deathless, eternal, and changeless. He knows that for him death is only throwing away a worn-out cloth to get a new one. People think that death is being no more. Those who think thus, make much of health, wealth, beauty and property ; and when they care for these, it means that they identify themselves with their bodies.

The man who is vain on account of his wealth, on account of his health, on account of his beauty or learning, what does he gain? Even if he can read all the Vedas, he is not qualified to know the Truth. All this only increases his vanity. Sri Ramakrishna used to compare such vain pundits to vultures, who, although they soar high in the sky, always have their minds on the carrion pits on the earth. This is no learning. The real learning is that which will enable a man to realise the Truth. Our Master used to say: 'Repeating "Food, food, food," will not appease your hunger': so repeating the text of the books will not appease your spiritual hunger. Your hunger will be satisfied only when you see God. God is that food, eating which you will never hunger again. God is that drink, drinking which you will never thirst again. You imagine that unless you have wealth, health, beauty and property, you cannot be happy. But you have actually need of nothing, for you are already complete and perfect. You are now really omnipotent, really omniscient, and you have forgotten it. You have thrown away the diamond and are making much of a pebble in the street. You have given up your omniscience, and are thinking yourself a scholar with a little learning, belonging to a certain community, a Brahmin, a limited being, three and a half cubits in length. No, you are

infinitely better than all this. When you once understand this, you will not be content with these little things. You will say : " Not only this wealth is mine, but I possess this wealth of the whole universe, for God Himself is my wealth. He is my father and mother, and all my relatives."

When a man comes thus to identify himself with the universal Power, then he sees that nothing really belongs to him, that he does not really belong to himself, that all belongs to that Power ; and he says : " Now I have found out that nothing belongs to me. This body is not mine ; if it were, I could do with it what I choose. This mind is not mine, for I have no power to control it. Am I in anyway then my own master ? No ; for I must go away whenever that Power wills. Then I must be the property of that Power, since He does with me whatever He chooses. When thus a man knows that he is nobody, that he can do nothing for himself, at that moment God comes and says : " Now he is not trying to guide himself, so I will guide him. I have been guiding him all the while but he did not know it. Now let him see that I am doing it." So God begins to walk with his legs, to work with his hands ; He begins to see through his eyes, to hear through his ears, to speak through his mouth, to think through his mind ; and the man becomes a saint. He speaks like God, he looks like God,

he acts like God ; and he makes himself blissful and all others blissful. But this can be reached only by complete self-denial. Say: I have nothing. This little beauty is not mine ; I am eternally beautiful. This little span of life is not mine, my life has no beginning and no end. My knowledge is not this little limited knowledge, but it is infinite."

Why should you throw away your perfect nature and take an imperfect nature? Why do you give up your infinite life for this perishable life of a few years? You have degraded yourself so low that you cannot fall any lower. The omnipotent, omniscient, immortal, eternal being is imagining that he dies, that he is limited, ignorant, weak and helpless.

You are pure, you are perfect. Hear it from one who has realized it and try to realize it yourself. You are pure, you are spotless. Do not give way to false imaginations. This false imagining will make you what you are imagining yourself to be. You are like the man who has received the false news that all his property has been lost and he begins to weep: "All my fortune is gone, how shall I live? What shall I do?", while all the time his lands and money are there just as before. So you are imagining that you are poor and helpless.

You have not lost your infinite glory ; but the false news has been brought to you and so you have

been imagining yourself weak, miserable and imperfect. Now the good news that you are not all this, comes to you from the great teachers, like Sri Krishna, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna. Believe them when they tell you that you are absolutely perfect, all-knowing, all-blissful and immortal.



BOOK THREE

NOTA BENE

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य क्षायते महतो भयात् ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता । २.४०.

*In this, there is no waste of unfinished attempt, nor
is there production of contrary results. Even
very little of this Dharma protects from the
great terror,*

ARGUMENTS AGAINST ATHEISM

ONE summer morning I was sitting self-absorbed under a tree on the bank of the beautiful river that threads its silvery way along the eastern skirt of our little town. The place was full of peace, and there was a calm in the atmosphere that led me unconsciously into meditation. I had sat there some time when I was startled by a keen-looking youngman asking me whether he could have a conversation with me. I had not seen him approach; but evidently my monastic garb had attracted his notice.

"Please excuse me," he said, "for encroaching upon your solitude. But certain deep thoughts are tormenting the peace of my soul. I think you can help me a little."

I welcomed him, saying, "Please be seated. May I know what is troubling you?"

"I am an atheist," he replied. I could not help laughing at the way, he gave out the last word. "It is a very big word for a *man* to utter," I said. "Do you know what all it implies?"

He said, "By what I said, I simply meant that I find no grounds for continuing to believe in the Divine Existence. Please do not take my words as empty bravadoes. I come from a very

devout Vaishnava family, and had been nurtured from my early age in the traditions of Divine Mercy, love and goodness. But as I grew in knowledge these ideas vanished away like mist before the sun. I even now wish I could get back the unsophisticated days of my childhood. But, sir, what my heart desires, my intellect denies. The vision of sunny boyhood is now lost in the clouds of scepticism. I cannot find solace in a faith which is not upheld by reason and the more I study and think, the stronger grows the conviction in me that the existence of God is a pure myth, a creation of the befogged intelligence of the uninformed masses."

The confession of the young man touched my soul with its sincerity and pathos. He was indeed suffering. I said, "There is God—God does exist. How far have you studied?" He replied, "I am a Master of Science. How do you prove the existence of God? What is your definition of God?", to which I said, "You are a student of Science, do you believe in the reality of an energy working in the world, in gross and subtle ways, and that your body is resisted and controlled by that energy?" "Yes, I believe in the existence of such energy, but it is dead, unintelligent," was the reply. I asked him, "Do you not feel that your mind cannot always act in the way you wish it to act, that there

too a power is resisting its free course?" He admitted the truth of my question. I continued, "I define God as the Power Supreme, working in and through, and sustaining and controlling all that exist, and perceived by man as an insurmountable resisting and driving Power *".

The young man looked a little surprised at my definition. He said, "I confess this is quite an original way of defining God, I mean, God as resisting Power. But I fear I cannot accept it. I admit, I feel a power working in and through my mind and body, which undoubtedly is not under my control. But I am resisted by powers not within myself alone; there are powers visible and invisible which, I find, are always obstructing me. Say, my parents and superiors, they do often resist my desires. Are they therefore God? Are society, and government God because they resist? There are a many who eclipse me by their superior intelligence and power, are they also God? How absurd! Again, I don't see how this your definition agrees with the popular idea of God that He is all mercy, love and goodness. Your definition posits him only as a force, blind, cruel, mechanical, purposeless and insentient."

* How the latter portion of the definition reminds one of Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*!—Ed.

My young friend was going on enthusiastically. I calmed him, saying, "Peace, my friend! What leads you to think that that Power is purposeless and mechanical?"

He burst out: "Why, the unnumbered deaths on earth, the untold sufferings of men. Do the miseries of life require to be counted? Is not every life a direct denial of a kind and good God? Blindness, poverty, helplessness, disease, death—these are but few of man's lot, thwarting his happiness at every step. How hideous your God must be, to be a combination of all these! And what purpose does he serve by subjecting man to all these thousand ills?"

I replied, "From what you said, I understand that you have brought two charges against my definition. First, if whatever resists one is God, then one's parents and superiors, society, government, and death and disease and all sufferings are God; secondly, that this resisting Power is purposeless and blind and as such to call it God would be misnomer. My friend, in spite of this two-fold accusations, I still stick to my definition; your arguments are vitiated by one miscalculation. Why do you take the resisting Power piecemeal and not in entirety? You remind me of a beautiful parable often told by my Master. Just listen:

"Four blind men went out to know an elephant. One touched the leg of the elephant and said, "The elephant is like a pillar." The second touched the trunk and said, "The elephant is like a thick club." The third touched the belly and said, "The elephant is like a big jar." The fourth touched the ears and said, "The elephant is like a big winnowing basket." Thus they began to dispute about it amongst themselves. A passer-by, seeing them thus quarrelling, said, "What is it you are disputing about?" They told him everything regarding their perception of the elephant and asked him to arbitrate among them. The man said, "None of you has seen the elephant. The elephant is not like a pillar, its legs are like pillars. It is not like a winnowing basket, its ears are like winnowing baskets. It is not like a stout club, its proboscis is like a club. The elephant is the combination of all these, of its legs, ears, belly and trunk." Do you understand the point of the parable? Yes, God is all those hideous and cruel things that you mentioned; but they are cruel and hideous and also meaningless, when you take them separately and piecemeal; taken as a whole they become beautiful, good and meaningful.

It is as absurd to describe God as the combination of blindness, poverty, and helplessness, as it is absurd to describe an elephant as a thick club.

Because your parents and superiors resist your desire in many instances, they are therefore not the whole of God, because society and government resist you similarly therefore they are not God in themselves, because another man, more powerful more intelligent, more learned resists you, he is not God on that account. God is the whole resisting Power taken in its entirety."

"But" rejoined the other, "When we look at an elephant we do not always look upon the whole of its body. We sometimes look at its trunk, sometimes look at its ears, and compare them with other things of similar nature; do we not? Similarly we have full right to look at the different phases of this God of yours and pass our judgments on those phases. This being granted, when we see a widow is deprived of her only child, and cast helplessly into the world to writhe herself in the extreme agony of bereavement, is that not very cruel of that power which you call God, and should we serve such a cruel Master?"

"Willy nilly you are bound to serve inasmuch as you are completely under its control, for you cannot deny the resistance which you get from all sides. But this power appears to you to be cruel when you look upon only one side of it forgetting its other sides of which this side is a connecting link. As when you simply look upon a portion of

the ear of the elephant, it appears to you to be very ugly, but seen with the whole body, there is no such ugliness. The parents sometime whip their children. Whipping in itself is very ugly, but when we consider the motive of the parents we cannot always condemn it. Government hangs a culprit. Now hanging is very nasty and cruel. But the fellow hanged, has lately butchered his wife and children. When you know of this, does his hanging appear to you to be nasty and cruel at all? So you see what appears to be apparently cruel, may really be not so if you dive deep into the matter."

"But in the cases you have cited", answered my friend, "the children are wicked and the man is a culprit. As for the widow I am speaking of, she is generally reputed to be a very pious woman. Is the sorrow for the loss of her child the fruit of her piety?"

"No, certainly not. That is the fruit of her ignorance and want of piety. If her devotion and love towards her God were greater than that towards her child, then she could not feel the bereavement at all, but on the contrary she would be rather grateful to her Lord for removing her bondage and impediment. But as that Almighty power does not like that the pious woman should be in the darkness of ignorance, It has taken away the child, which virtually belongs to It, for through

Its influence alone the child came into existence, to Its own side. It is through mistake we call our own what really is not our own. So in order to dispel that mistake It has taken away the child from the widow. She may weep for a few days, but after that period she will find consolation in herself, knowing it for certain, that the child was not hers but God's and that there is nothing else permanent save God, and so if she places her love in God there is no fear of further bereavement whereas if it be placed in things other than God, there is every chance of separation."

At this the other cried out "What! children are impediments in the path of virtue! Those sweet innocent cherubs that make this otherwise miserable world an abode of happiness and joy to all men,—are they to be considered as barriers on our way? They rather serve to give us life and vigour in our tedious journeys through the world."

"No, no they are not barriers, so long as they do not occupy that place in our heart which we should allot to that power we call God, that being Eternal and Great,—greatest of all existing things, for, by definition everything is under the control of God. As the maidservant of a wealthy man nurses the children of her master, and acts as a second mother to them, chastising them if they do anything wrong, coaxing and caressing them to

sleep and doing sundry other motherly services to them, but all the while knowing that the children are not hers but her master's; so if a man or a woman can look upon his or her children as the children of God and that he or she is simply a servant employed by God for their sake, then there can be no bondage. All things will go on smoothly." This was my reply.

The other asked, "But then why should your God create pain, sorrow, anguish, folly, ignorance and all such things at all? As you say that your God is almighty, It could easily do away with all those nasty things, and make this world a place of incessant bliss. There is no necessity of teaching through the process of flogging."

To this I replied, "You may hate pain, sorrow, anguish, folly, ignorance, &c, but of course, on the contrary, you love pleasure, jolity, enjoyment, knowledge and all such good things. Don't you?"

"There is no doubt about it," was the quick reply. "Well, my dear Sir," said I, "there can be no pleasure without pain, no knowledge without ignorance.

"Strange! How can that be?", questioned he, to which I replied, "Just imagine one incessant course of uniform pleasure without any break. Since by hypothesis there is no break in the

uniform course, you won't be able to compare your present state of happiness with any intermediate state and in that case you will not be able to know whether that state is a happy state or not; for we think ourselves happy, when we compare our state of happiness with a previous state of inferior happiness, i.e. happiness mingled with a little bit of pain. So you see that uniformity of happiness is no happiness at all. You will know yourself happy only when you experience a little bit of pain, and greater the pain you feel, the greater the enjoyment of happiness you will get in return, for by comparison alone you will come to know how miserable you were and now happy now you are. A hungry man relishes his food, much more than one who has not so much hunger. Similar is the case with knowledge and ignorance. You can only know that you are more learned when you compare notes with your past school career. So you see that if you want to enjoy bliss, the pleasure of knowledge, and all such good things, you will have to take up pain, ignorance &c, too along with them. Pleasure and pain are the two sides of the same thing. You cannot take up pleasure without pain nor pain without pleasure. Therefore your idea of a world where there is perpetual, intense and uniform happiness, falls to the ground."

"But do they not tell of a place called Heaven where Indra reigns and is that not full of bliss perennial?", inquired he. "How can you account for that? Do you believe that your scriptures simply imagine some false impossibilities?"

"Why? no. Those who share in the bliss of Heaven, they remember their past miseries in the world, and because they have the previous experiences of great miseries, they can supremely enjoy the pleasures of Heaven by comparing them with their past miserable lives on the Earth." Such was my reply, at which he turned the course of our talk by saying, "Very well. Let us return to our old question. You said, God is the combination of all what resist our desires and by so doing leads us. It is a sort of antipower as regards ourselves, which is ever free and therefore almighty, and always resisting without being resisted. Has that power any intelligence? Can it feel as we do?" To this my answer was, "Look into the workings of that Energy. Are they not orderly and regular? Can order and regularity come out of non-intelligence? Look at the flowers. How tastefully they are made! Look at the beauties of Nature. How sweetly they are spread before you for your enjoyment! Can they proceed from a being that has neither feeling nor taste? Look at your own self. You are nothing but what that Power is making you.

It is gradually lifting you up from the lowly basement of ignorance to the exalted pinnacle of knowledge. It is making you more and more unselfish, more and more noble, more and more intelligent, more and more pious, as you grow more and more old. If you dive deep into the workings of this Power, you will gradually see that it is really bringing you up with a thousand times more care and love than what your parents can command."

At this he asked, "How can that be since this Power resists my desire, whereas my parents love me and readily give me whatever I ask of them?" At this I questioned him in return, "Do not your parents too, resist your desires when your desires tend towards evil? The senses are the causes of our desire. Unless those desires be checked we will be led hither and thither by the senses which are always misleading, for they confirm us in our errors of seeing as permanent what are impermanent. So you see that by checking desires the errors are checked. Is that not a great benefit? By timely resistance from this Power we are brought to a proper sense of our real position."

"But" replied he, "the Scriptures attribute to the Power we are speaking of, which you call, God, many beautiful male and female forms. How can you account for that? As far as I have

understood you, that Power can have no such form or if it has any, it is the whole universe. The whole universe is the body of that infinite Power. It cannot be called either male or female, but males and females and all things proceed from it."

"Well, I see you have hit upon the universal form of the Lord," I replied. "But did I not tell you that that Power is a thousand times more loving than your parents, and is the repository of all sorts of powers and that there is none to resist It? This being the case, and it being the more natural, the more easy and more attractive for us to know it as our own dearest, most beautiful, most loving, and the nearest of all friends and relations in the universe, we naturally look upon It as such and It becomes the most loving He or She at least for our sake, for what is impossible for an almighty, all-merciful and all-loving Power? So you see, He (henceforth we should not call Him It) cannot be altogether unknown and unknowable. His very loving and kind nature disproves this. When those spotless, pure children of Nature, the Sages and Rishis of yore ardently desired to see their unseen father, their unseen Mother that was supplying them with all their little wants, was keeping them from all unforeseen dangers, was decorating their sylvan abodes with exquisitely beautiful, and divinely fragrant flowers, was entertaining them

daily with the melodies poured forth from the throats of Nature's sweet choristers, the gaudily dressed, and clear voiced merry denizens of the air, that Father or that Mother could not conceal Himself or Herself longer and appeared before them as Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, as Saraswati, Lakshmi, Durga. So you see our scriptures are nothing but a record of Divine Graces poured forth at different times on different fortunate and pure-hearted individuals. These men are the authors of our scriptures. They know something of God, and what they know they recorded for the benefit of the posterity."

The friend replied, "Well, it may be, your God is really loving and kind. In that case I cannot deny that, although I have much doubt about his loving kindness. But to return: you just now said that desires lead men to error. So according to you the giving up of desire is therefore the best means to escape from the grip of error." To this I answered, "Yes, moreover if you have no desire you will not experience any resistance from the hands of God. A permanent peace will be established between your God and yourself, i.e., your interest will be blended with that of God. Your ideas will be His ideas and vice versa, i.e. you will lose your own self in His self, as a river loses itself in the ocean." "But" added I, "why

don't you believe that He is all-loving and all-merciful?"

"Because" said he, "if He be all-merciful, He cannot be almighty. For, since He is all-merciful, how can He see one of His creatures suffer? That is against His nature. The moment He sees one of His children suffering, He will at once relieve him for He is almighty. But unfortunately my dear sir, that is not the case as we daily experience in the world.

"Why" I replied, "I do not experience any such thing in the world. A man once got a big ulcer on his back, which unless operated, would surely end in his death. The man was helpless and poor. But a kind doctor, who lived next door, came to see him of his own accord, without asking any fee, and made the necessary operation. O! the agony which the man was in, at the time of the operation, is beyond all descriptions. The fond grandmother of the man began to rail at the doctor for his inhumanity. Do you join with the old lady to call him inhuman, although the man got perfectly cured after a few days? So, although the doctor was apparently cruel yet he was very merciful. Similarly the apparently cruel God is nothing but merciful. But perhaps you will say, a doctor having but limited power, cannot help the poor man in a better way, but as regards God the

case is altogether different with Him. He could cure him if He simply willed, without giving him so much trouble, for by hypothesis He is almighty. To this my answer is, that He could, no doubt cure him in no time as well as He could have given him no ulcer at all, but since He had purposely given that to him, He did not like to cure him so soon in order to remind him of his past misconducts and thus to make him more careful about his future conduct.

By this time the Sun has lifted himself up a considerable way above the horizon, and has been sending over us some of his lusty rays through the branches of the trees to remind us that we should go home and take upon ourselves the shares of our daily duties. Thus we departed.

I never met the young man again. *

* The dialogue instituted in *Arguments against Atheism* is an imaginary conversation.

MORALITY AS A FACTOR IN THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY

ALL living beings are endowed with organs of diverse sorts and of various dimensions by means of which they enjoy life. From the tiniest animalcule which cannot be discerned without the aid of a microscope to the biggest animals such as the elephant, the rhinoceros and all, possess senses by which they can know, feel, and enjoy this world which holds out various attractions for every one of them. But of all these organs the most perfect and complicated organs are those of men. The organs of other animals are far more simple and therefore far less capable of knowing and enjoying this world, a world whose existence may be said to depend simply upon the senses, the real self-existent world being beyond the ken of all living beings. Animals with the simplest organs do not possess as many senses as those with more complex organs and these latter are generally known to possess five senses so that they can see, hear, smell, touch and taste by means of them. In animals lower than man one or other of these five senses predominates over the rest. The elephants, we hear, have a keen sense of touch and they have a great love for a soft-warm touch, so much so that they peril their own safety, being enamoured of the soft

touch of the she-elephant sent to decoy them to a strong-hold where once entering they lose all their liberty for the rest of their lives. The elephants are known to be very intelligent among the lower animals, but all their intelligence avails them nothing when they get infatuated with the soft and warm touch of the she-elephant. The bees are known to have great fondness for smell and they lose their lives in the lotus which they enter to enjoy its sweet fragrance, that generates in them a lethean forgetfulness, makes them altogether overlook the fact that the petals are closing around them with the close of the day and thus would cause them to be buried alive. The insects are known to be very fond of bright forms and they actually sacrifice their lives in the bright, beautiful and flickering flames being enamoured of its glory. The fish sacrifice their lives for taste. The angler sits upon the bank of the brook with his rod and line in his hand. The dissembling bait allures the foolish fry. It cannot resist the temptation of tasting what promises to be an exceptionally good dish, and is at once hooked and pulled out of its element to be thrust into the bag and to die. The hunter plays upon his flute, and sings a very nice and alluring song. The deer hard by is enamoured of the melody; the least idea of imminent danger has no place in her. The poisoned and cruel dart

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enters her heart from the heartless bow of the hunter, and she dies a victim to music. The elephant, the bee, the insect, the fish, and the deer represent each of the five senses in its highly developed state and we have seen how their very senses become the causes of their death. When one sense predominates in any of the lower animals, it becomes the cause of its ruin, and all these senses in their highly developed state, constitute the human organism, and is it wonderful then, that a human being, surrounded on all sides by such mortal enemies, has every chance of losing his life every moment of his existence?

Life seems to be worth living only for the enjoyments which it holds out to all, and all these enjoyments are seated in the senses. The sensuous pleasures, therefore, are the only attractions for every living being to attach him to this world and alas! these very senses also are the causes of his ruin. Because these senses are the only means of our enjoyments, therefore all living beings are slaves to them. Pleasure is the one thing which we love and pain is what we want to avoid. Our life is made up of a constant struggle to avoid pain and court pleasure. Pleasure is the only thing which almost all people worship and these pleasures are all seated in the senses and is it not therefore natural for them to worship these senses,

but for which there can be no pleasure? Hence all living beings are devoted adorers of the senses, so much so that their devotion to them has led them to identify themselves with them. The more pleasure we get from a certain thing, the more are our love and attraction for that thing. We have seen that in the lower animals one or other of the five senses is highly developed and therefore they are fondly attached to that sense so much so that they identify themselves with it. This identification is the cause of their attachment to the body; hence it is that none of them ever likes to be separated from that body i.e., give up its life. For self is the one thing which is universally loved and that self being identified with the body, the body gets to be universally loved.

From what has been already said it must be clear that the love of life or an intense desire for the preservation of the body, is simply a collection of the senses. All of the five senses are highly developed in a human being, and every one of them can bring to him a certain amount of pleasure. Hence his attachment to them or his body should be more than that of the lower animals, whose senses are not so highly developed and therefore less capable of enjoyment. Moreover man is endowed with the reasoning power by means of which he can distinguish what is right and what is

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wrong, what is pleasurable and what is painful, and also how to get the greatest amount of pleasure with the least amount of exertion; whereas the lower animals, are simply guided by their instincts which are always very limited, and as such can only give them a very limited idea of pleasure and enjoyment. All the enjoyments of the world are open to man. He can mix and combine them in an infinite number of different ways and can thus create for himself an innumerable number of artificial pleasures in addition to what nature already has given him. And this makes him cling to life more fondly and ardently than all other animals. The things of enjoyment being vast and immense, and enjoyment being the one passion of his mind, the arch-animal man has no time to employ his mind otherwise than in an incessant search after pleasures, all of which are located in the senses. Man, the slave of pleasures, is therefore a slave to the senses. And can a slave have any time to think about himself, all his time being occupied in obeying the order of his master? And again what sort of slavery is it that man labours under? Let us study the matter carefully.

We have seen that the slave has no time to think about his own affairs, all his time being occupied in the thought of his master's affairs, even when that master is one. But suppose that

the slave belongs to two masters and thus has to serve both of them at the same time, and that both of them are simultaneously ordering him on two different errands. What would the slave do? It will be impossible for him to obey both the mandates at the same time. He will first obey the mandate of the master who is more demanding, importunate, uncompromising and tyrannical than the other and finish his work. Then he will be able to carry out the desire of the less importunate master who is not the less uncompromising and tyrannical for that. In this case the slave will have no time to sleep even. Now again if the slave has to serve three masters, his difficulty becomes much greater. If one master wants him to go to the North, another master will simultaneously want him to go to the South and a third master will want him to go to the West. Now what is he to do under such circumstances? He will have to first carry out the order of the most importunate and demanding master. He will have to do the biddings of only one. But do you think he will have rest after that? The first master has a fresh errand ready for him. When he does that, the second master is ready with another. In this way such a slave will get no idea of rest at all. He will have to be naturally restless. The slave who has to serve four or five masters will not know when and what to do for all his

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masters. He will have to be an idiot, a machine in the hands of his masters who will use him just as a group of young boys deal with the foot-ball, sending it in all directions by kicking it with their feet.

And such is the case with man and his relation to the senses. Says Jesus, "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." But alas! has man not only to serve two masters, but more than double the number of masters, who are always importunate, demanding, uncompromising, and tyrannical. A man is a slave to his senses. The tongue always wants him to bring good food, the eye always wants him to have beautiful things around him, the ear wants to hear sweet music and soft, flattering words, the nose always wants sweet-smelling flowers and perfumeries, and goading and impulsive passions are always demanding of him the fulfilment of their desires. What can be the state of a man's mind, when it is simultaneously lorded over by so many masters who are always hard to please? He is sure to be kicked all over the world even as a foot-ball. As a foot-ball in the play ground is never at rest, so a human mind in the play ground of this world is never at rest. Such being the case, it may be thought that human life, instead of being a very pleasant and enviable

thing is really one which is not in any way desirable ; and that it is better for a man to commit suicide than to try to live his life out. After what has been said, although such an inference may look logical and correct, it is not actually so, for as we have shown before, the nature of the mind is to search and struggle after pleasure, and it finds a peculiar pleasure in such struggles. Hence it is that, however miserable in this world a man may be, he never likes to lose his life, for he always expects that the circumstances will change, and good days may again dawn on him and that again he may be regaled with pleasures on all sides. This hope feeds the fire of his love of life. His hankering after sensual pleasures has made him blind to his abjectly slavish condition. He finds a peculiar pleasure in such slavery. Such is the characteristic of almost all human beings as well as of all the lower animals. Man, the arch-animal is so far nothing better than animal ; only his field and capacity for enjoyment are much greater than those of the lower animals. Because his enjoyments are greater here, his attachment to this earth and to his body is greater also ; he is pre-eminently worldly. He has come down so low, has identified himself with the world so fully that he thinks the world to be his real home, and that he is going to live here permanently. He earns money,

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purchases lands, builds houses and gardens, spans bridges, invents engines to make locomotion easy, in short makes this world as much habitable and comfortable as possible. Science has come to his aid for this purpose and as success however little, ever increases to an enormous degree, some hope to expect to bring out even immortality from the ever mysterious infinite store-house of nature where he hopes to find whatever he likes. Man, the ruler and master of this beautiful earth with its trees, rivers and mountains as well as of all the lower animals, therefore tries to beautify and adorn it according to his taste, even as a lover wants to adorn his sweet and naturally beautiful lady-love, according to his taste to enhance her beauty all the more. He is spending all his energies both physical and mental for this purpose alone. He is living continually in an atmosphere of poetry, forgetting the prosaic side of the question altogether, forgetting that his companionship with her is not eternal but ephemeral, not real, but imaginary, not productive of any good, but the source of all misery. In his mad love of the world, he has forgotten the real state of affairs. What sane man is here amongst you that will like to buy lands, erect buildings, dig wells and ponds in a place where he is destined to live for one night, for example in a caravansary on his way home? And

rightly considered is this world not such a caravansary to us who are destined to live no one knows how long, although every one knows not for a long time at all? At any moment of a man's life he may be called away, no matter whether it is night or day, no matter whether he is newly married or still a child, no matter whether his desires are satiated or not, no matter whether he is the only child of a helpless, blind and old father, or nurtured in the lap of luxury. Since this is the case with every one of us here, is it not sheer madness and foolishness on our part to try to make a permanent settlement here where permanency is the one thing which is not to be found anywhere. If we wallow in the mire of such forgetfulness, are we in any way better than the animals? They are also slaves to their senses and so are we.

Eating, sleeping, uniting with one another in love and fear—these things we have in common with the beasts; are we therefore in any way better than they?

When such questions rise, man begins to hate his animal life. He feels he has descended to the lowest level of abject animal life; now he wants to spurn that life and intensely desires to ascend to a higher godly life and morality supplies him with the necessary ladder to effect this

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purpose. By means of the ladder of morality alone, can a man expect to get rid of his brutish life and get back his higher or godly life. And what is morality? Morality is an incessant struggle for independence. We have already seen how the mind of a man has become a slave to his senses and to his passions and appetites. Blinded by an intense desire for sensual enjoyment he cannot have any idea of his abject condition and so what is really painful appears to him to be the source of all bliss. As long as this appetite for sensual enjoyment lingers in him, he will never be able to shake off this illusion. He will have to labour under this hypochondriasis, thinking this mortal life to be immortal, taking a foe to be his friend and a friend to be his foe. But when he does not like to be classified with animals, when his good nature tries to assert itself in him, when senses appear to him to be not his friends, but his enemies, when he considers that no sensual pleasure, however intense, can in reality, be called a pleasure, but rather pain in the form of pleasure and therefore much more harmful and painful than real pain, and when pleasure appears to him to be like a pill of quinine thinly coated over with sugar, he is then no more a hypochondriac, but sees things in their proper light. The light of morality then begins to shine and light the path leading

towards the Truth. He then clearly understands the meaning of Bhagavan Sri Krishna's priceless words, when that great teacher instructed his friend and disciple Arjuna in this way :

“O son of Kunti, know that all contact-born enjoyments are the sources of our misery, inasmuch as they have a beginning as well as an end. The sage therefore finds no pleasure in them.” The mind naturally desires to enjoy any pleasure permanently. If it likes anything, it hates a sudden break in the course of a certain enjoyment. But no such permanent enjoyment is to be found here, for all sensual pleasures must have a beginning after pain and an end when they end. The very ceasing of it becomes painful. So there is no pleasure here which neither follows nor is followed by pain. All sensual pleasures have pain in the beginning and pain in the end, are followed by pain and dissolve in pain, and how can such a pleasure be called a pleasure at all? It is pain in the garb of pleasure.

For him who reasons in this way, the world loses all its charms. At that time he does not like to be satisfied with false pleasures. He then searches after perennial bliss, a bliss which will last to eternity ; and this he does not find in the world outside, neither in his senses and therefore tries to find it out somewhere else beyond the senses. His

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first struggle therefore consists in waging an incessant war with the senses, for these latter will not easily let loose their slave who has been so obediently serving them all the while. The senses therefore always try to rob his mind from him and he, on the other hand, tries to disentangle the mind from their clutches and wean it away to his side. In this struggle for mental independence, morality should be made the Commander-in-Chief and all higher aspirations and nobler aims should be arrayed as soldiers to fight down the senses. The man must be strong and courageous, persevering and assiduous enough to continue the fight to the last, with the hope of a sure victory over the senses. If he be weak and cowardly, there can be no hope of victory, he is sure to fall a prey to his senses.

This self cannot be gained by a man who is weak and cowardly. He must shake off all false ideas of weakness in time. He can never be weak, if he believes himself to be a part and parcel of the all-powerful God. How can the child of such a father be weak? He must have faith in his own boundless strength, which, although latent, may be displayed to its full advantage whenever the occasion demands it. If the struggle is continued in this way, victory will come within a very short time. The senses want one to make friends with all the beautiful women of the world, morality commands:

“Marry only one girl and love her, if you cannot resist lustfulness, for, says St. Paul, ‘It is better to marry than to burn’, but if you can make yourself a ‘eunuch for the kingdom of God,’ that is far better and nobler.” The senses want a man to sacrifice truth for pleasure, morality comes forward and commands him to sacrifice pleasure for truth and duty. The senses want him to live for the enjoyments of life, morality commands him only to take as much enjoyments in the shape of food and drink, as is necessary to keep his body and soul together, for, fools alone live to eat, whereas the wise only eat to live. The senses want him to believe that all pleasures lie centered in them, morality comes forward and says: “No, the senses are the homes of misery, pain and anguish; the abode of pleasure is beyond the senses. So spurn the senses, go beyond them, and you will find bliss perennial. March onward and never stop until you crush the senses under your feet.” When perseverance, strength and courage at last win the day, and when the senses are fully subdued, then begins to rise, on the horizon of his mental plane, the gladdening suns of Truth and Bliss which are eternally and indissolubly connected with each other and shed their benign, congenial, balmy and life-giving rays so as to plunge the victor into the ocean of breakless beatitude.

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When the senses are thus fully subdued, they in their turn, become the slaves of man and, instead of being foes, they become his most helping friends. Like his mind his whole body becomes pure, and consequently only wants to associate itself with pure and holy things. The downward course of the senses is stopped and they all flow towards the attainment of Truth and Bliss. The eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the entire body want to associate themselves with such people as have attained the Truth. Mind and body act in harmony at the time and there is an end of all quarrel between them once for all.

When the mind becomes free, it is at that time left to itself. Its former restlessness gives place to eternal calm, and in that calm and placid surface of mental ocean, the true image of the self, or God, or Truth is reflected. The whole man is then filled with Divinity. He is no longer a slave, but a master. Such a man is the real prop of a society. He alone is termed a great man. He is not a plaything of circumstances or senses, rather he turns all circumstances and all senses to his favour. Study the character of any great man here, and you will find that he was such a master. Posterity follows the example of such a great man and thereby makes itself great. In the dark meandering paths of this world, he serves

as a beacon light to the weary travellers. Because he knows the Truth, he becomes immortal even as the Truth itself. Common ordinary men are being born and dying in large numbers. They are forgotten as soon as they are dead. With death their life ends. But such is not the case with great men. They live even after their death. Millions and millions of men have passed away, their names and homes have long been forgotten, but the sages, Buddha, Christ, Nanak, Chaitanya, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa are still living in the world and are destined to live as long as the world lasts. They are the leaders of humanity. But for them all human societies would have fallen to pieces, there would have been no peace, no law, no goodness, all human beings would have been so many beasts of the forest trying to kill one another, so that one might live upon the ruin of another and the physically fittest alone could survive in the struggle for existence, and the world would be more like a forest and a desert than a pleasant dwelling house for all good people. Then, man caring only for sensual pleasures, blind to all other pursuits, forgetting his noble and holy and higher nature, being a mere plaything of the senses, would find no time to build a site for himself to improve his condition in any way and to raise himself higher than the actual beasts of the forest.

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Civilization would in that case be an unknown term here and savagery and cannibalism would take its place. What a horrible picture is this! It actually would be the case, if the senses were allowed to rule and not the soul.

Study history, and you will find that at the root of the downfall of every nation there is immorality or sensuality. When in a nation the people, instead of serving God and Truth, serve the senses, the downfall of that nation is near at hand. When luxury, lustfulness, impiety, and lawlessness go unpunished, or overlooked, or are regarded as virtues, know that the doomsday of that nation is not far away. When a nation has no ideal to follow, when each individual is puffed up with vanity, thinks himself to be his own master, when religion and faith are pooh-poohed and scepticism, the child of false reasoning, is highly extolled, honoured and followed, know the death warrant of that nation has already been issued. When Rome became immoral and sensual, when her ancient heroism gave place to theatres and Colosseum, when humanity, goodness and charity were sacrificed at the altar of cruelty, debauchery, and savagery, when the halls of her conquering children were filled with the merry laughers of dancing girls, filling and distributing among them goblets of inebriating tonic, and to warlike and martial songs

lewd and debasing melodies were preferred, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was inevitable. When France lost all faith in God, when a harlot was publicly worshipped and carried round the streets of Paris as the goddess of Reason, when the people lost their commonsense, then the bloody and horribly cruel Revolution swept all over the country, plunging her into a sea of blood. All disasters, all downfalls, are the outcome of immorality.

Leisure is the cause of all progress. But can a slave ever expect to have any leisure? We have seen how a common man of the world is an abject slave to his senses, passions and appetites, all of which have made him as restless as the wind. The restlessness of the human mind is therefore compared to a naturally restless monkey, made more restless by drink, by a wasp stinging at it, and by the possession of a ghost. It is only when the senses are brought under control that the man gets a little leisure; then alone can he turn his mind to good account. It is very easy to let loose the reins and then allow the horses to run in whatever directions they choose, but it requires an effort, strength, dexterity and skill to control them and guide them through proper paths. This shows that the man who can control his passions and turn them to good account is really a strong, skilful, and dexterous individual. Him we call a moral man.

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Morality consists in abstaining from all sensual pleasures. An abstinent and continent man is the highest type of a moral man. All great men of the world are abstinent and therefore moral men. They are the real masters of human societies, and not kings, emperors and wealthy folks. The powers of these latter last only for a few days, whereas the influence of the former will be felt to the end of creation.

Study the character of Sri Ramachandra. When his wicked mother wanted him to be banished from the kingdom for fourteen years, he could easily withstand her will, occupy his legal throne, rule his territory and enjoy all the good fruits thereof; but he abstained from doing all these things, because he was not a man given to sensuality; he preferred truth to enjoyment and he liked to see others happy much more than he wanted to enjoy that happiness himself. When the least of his subjects complained against the spotless character of the innocent, chaste, ever-beloved and everloving Sita, dearer to him than anything else in the world, he immediately gave up her and banished her, although he had to rend his heart asunder to carry out such an extremely cruel act, altogether, foreign to his sweet and loving nature so that his subjects might be pleased thereby. To do good to others, even at the cost of one's own liberty and comfort, is the characteristic of a great man, and Sri Ramachandra

was such a one. That is the reason why up to his death he was worshipped as God and is destined to be so worshipped as long as the world lasts.

Yudhisthira, the son of Dharma, is another example of such a model man. Duryodhana, the wicked son of the blind king Dhritarashtra, tried several times to put him and his brothers to death, to disinherit them by all sorts of filthy means, and spared no pains to insult, torture and persecute them in as many satanic ways as he could invent. Yudhisthira bore them all silently, and, instead of cursing him, he always looked upon him as his own dear cousin.

Not that he could not punish him for all his ignominiousness and cruelty; if he had liked he could have completely washed him off the page of existence; but he liked to see him happy and enjoy his life as an emperor more than he wanted to be an emperor himself. It was only when he saw that his mother, wife and brothers had to suffer much on his account, he consented to declare war against the satanic Prince and put him and his followers down altogether in the field of Kurukshetra.

My dear friends, if you want to know what morality is, if you want to raise yourselves from the low level of a human brute to the highest plane of a God-man, if you want to be blessed with the enjoyment of real pleasure, if you want to save

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yourselves from the bondage of senses and passions, if you want to bask yourselves under the benign rays of the Sun of Truth and Bliss, if you want to be real benefactors of humanity, study the character of Sri Ramachandra and Sri Yudhisthira as depicted in the two of the greatest epics of the world, *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*. Here, in this connection, I cannot resist the temptation of quoting the million-times quoted, universally known song of Longfellow, to impress on your minds the necessity of such studies.

Lives of great men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
 And departing leave behind us
 Foot-prints on the sands of time :
 Foot-prints that perhaps another,
 Sailing over life's solemn main,
 A forlorn and ship-wrecked brother
 Seeing shall take heart again.

So we see that if we want to be moral ourselves we must read and study the lives of all moral and great people, for by so doing we shall be always in their company, and breathe the bracing atmosphere of purity and goodness which is sure to fill us up with noble energy, vigour and aspiration. Says the Spanish proverb, "Live with the dogs and you will learn to howl." Whatever company we keep, our mind is sure to be moulded according to that. Mind

is like a reflecting glass, it reflects whatever light it comes in contact with. So we should be particularly careful about the company we keep. Can then any company be better than those ideal characters whom I have just now mentioned for our edification?

Examples are more than words. If you talk big and lead a very happy life no one will hear you; but if you, live an exemplary and moral life and do not talk and preach at all, it will be more than preaching twenty thousand sermons. What is there in mere talk? Every one can talk upon morality and religion, but, far from being a moral man in the least, he may be the greatest of scoundrels. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna well describes an ordinary man of the world when he says that a man can talk baskets of good things, but not one of these good things he can ever realise. So there is no newness or interest in any talk here in this world. A practically good man is indeed a rarity here and whatever is rare naturally creates an interest all around. People cannot but honour, revere and worship such a man. A really good man, although he may be dumb all his life, does real good to the society in which he lives and moves. So, my dear friends, if you want to improve your society, improve yourselves first by being moral and good, for, as we have seen, morality and goodness alone can improve a man. There is on other way.

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Essentially there is no difference between morality and religion. An immoral religious man is as impossible to imagine as a triangular circle. Religion consists in the renunciation of sensual pleasures. So also does morality. Morality raises a man from the kingdom of animals to the kingdom of God and religion takes him by the hand and leads him into that kingdom and brings him face to face with God. Morality is the active side of religion. Its existence is in practice and not in theory. Man's higher religion consists in meditation and enjoyment of God when once he is admitted into that higher plane of morality. Morality is the gate-keeper of the kingdom of Heaven and higher religion is a guide in that kingdom to lead the man to God, who is the one eternal Truth and Bliss combined together.

The path of morality is an uphill path and therefore not so easy to travel. It requires an effort on the part of the traveller. It is easy to get angry, but it is difficult to restrain anger; it is easy to curse, but it is difficult to bless him who despitely curses you. It is easy to love friends, it is difficult to pray for the well-being of one's own enemy. But we must always remember that there can be no royal road to moral perfection as there is no royal road to Geometry. To realise the highest end we must struggle hard and always pray to

God to help us. Says Jesus, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you" "Heaven helps those who help themselves." The Father in Heaven is always watching our works here with interest and when He sees one of His children sincerely labouring to gain a certain end and not finding it, which always demands a little more strength from him, He stretches forth His helping hand and enables His child to reach his ideal. Such being the case, why should we lose our hearts knowing that we have an ever-merciful and almighty Father always beside us to help us out of all difficulties and give us whatever we want?

Faith in God, my dear friends, is the surest and easiest means to make you great and good and morally perfect. "A fool hath said in his heart there is no God," says the Bible. "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind", says Bacon. Although Bacon, because he was a Christian, could not believe in all the fables of the Alcoran, as a Mahomedan should do, yet he could not bring himself down to believe that this universal frame was without a mind. God appeared to him to be so self-evident. Looking at the creation, no sane man can bring himself to believe that there is no

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creator behind it. So if God is a reality, and if that God is all-merciful and everywhere, is it not a matter of great advantage to us to achieve whatever is noble and high and great, since the ever-smiling, ever-helping God is ready to help us whenever we want? When I do a certain difficult action in the presence of one who can easily do that and will readily help me to do it, if I only ask him, I never get disheartened at seeing the difficulty of the work, but rather try my best to do the work myself without asking the help of my superior. I find a certain energy and alacrity in doing that difficult piece of business instead of getting disheartened and being doubtful of my success. Such is the case with the man who has faith in God, who lives and moves and has his being in God, who knows God to be his nearest and dearest friend. So let us all be faithful servants of God so that we may be great and good and make others great and good as well, more easily, than if we were to try to realise that highest ideal with our own limited capacity. So let us sing with Longfellow again :

Trust no future however pleasant,
 Let the dead past bury its dead,
 Act, act in the living present
 Heart within and God on head.

CONTROL OF THE SENSES

WHAT are these senses? They are nothing in themselves. It is we who have given them their power. But they have had it for ages, so they take it as their own. Now, when we would conquer them, they rise up and make us slaves. This, however, is really the fault of the man himself. When he is able to understand clearly that the senses are the cause of all his misery, then he can very easily put them down. But that realization does not come without a struggle. The man continues to linger here expecting something good, something great from this world; and so long as he thinks in this way, he will not realize that through the senses no true happiness can come. He must first learn to distinguish the real from the unreal, good from bad, and then take only the good. Thus he will gradually rise above the senses.

When you can bring your senses under your control, they can be made to lead you to God. These very energies which have led you away from the Lord, may now take you to Him. But the senses are very delusive. Even the highest man is sometimes dragged down by them to the lowest plane of sensuality. For this reason you must wage an incessant war against them. There is no other way. For the man who wants to realize the Truth,

the first duty should be to put down the senses, and fixing his mind on the Lord, to regard Him as the highest.

Why do you turn to the senses? Because you want to go where you will always be happy, and you think that your senses will lead you there. You imagine that one place or one thing will make you the happiest, and you start out at once to go to it. When this idea comes and you run towards the object of your desire, nothing then can check you. Why? Because you regard that to be the highest; and the senses, you believe, will help you to get it. The senses, however, merely obey you. They are not to blame. You yourself are at fault. Sri Krishna now comes and says: "My dear friend, you have seen all these things in the Universe, and the universe is a place of infinite variety. Of all that is to be found here, the highest and most desirable thing is the Lord". When you can understand this very clearly by means of comparison, that He is the highest and the best, at that moment all your sense energies will rush towards Him.

The mind always aspires after the biggest, the highest, the greatest. If you put down a ten-rupee note and beside it a hundred-rupee note, it will take the hundred rupees. If beside the hundred-rupee note you place a thousand rupee note, it will

take the thousand rupees. If some one tells you that great wealth is to be found in a certain place, at once you will give up your present modest income and run there. In the same way, when you realize that nothing is so beautiful as God, nothing is so great as God, nothing is so good or so kind as God; when you grasp this as you do the value of the thousand rupees over the ten and hundred rupees, you will rush towards God. Then you will say: "Do I desire wisdom? God is my wisdom. Do I want wealth? God is my wealth. Do I want learning? God is my learning. Do I seek a home where I shall be at rest? Then God shall be my home, my place of rest."

The moment you feel this in your heart of hearts, then even if you are a little child like Dhruva, you will be able to do great things. Because his mother told him that God was in the jungle, he entered it without doubt or fear, for a little child never doubts his mother's word. When he saw the lions and tigers, he was not afraid. He only thought that God was playing with him by coming in such strange forms, so he began to talk to them; and because he was not afraid, they did not harm him. So it is with you. If you understand clearly that the Lord is the highest, then nothing will frighten or discourage you; all your senses will run in the direction of the Supreme, and

both your mind and your senses will help you to reach Him.

Where is God? He is where the world is not. When after studying the universe you realize that it has come out of a great all-wise Being, then you think: "I must go to Him and get a little of that Wisdom." And to go to Him you must go away from the universe. Whether He is extra-cosmic or intra-cosmic it makes no difference; for in either case you will have to go out of the universe. You cannot take two things. You must take the one or the other. If you wish to go to God, you will have to turn your back on the world.

These senses when out-going lead you to creation. But you wish to go to God. Therefore you must indraw your senses.

They must be controlled and turned in the opposite direction. He is seated in the heart; so all your sense energies, all your mental energies must converge to that one point and take you there. But this can be done only when you realize that He is the best, the highest in the whole universe. "Thou art my father, Thou art my mother; Thou art my friend, Thou art my companion; Thou art my learning, Thou art my wealth: Thou art my all in all, my one Lord".

God's ego, God's spirit, God's self are all one and the same, for they are all infinite, and there

cannot be two infinities. Our *Atman* (Self) and our ego are diametrically opposed, because one is infinite and the other is finite. For this reason God is called the *Paramātmān* or Supreme Self. If you would control your senses and your mind, you must look upon Him as this Supreme Self and love Him with all your heart and soul. The perverse tendency of the senses will be controlled at that moment; and instead of leading you to the outside creation and to death, they will lead you inward to God. So you see that when you regard God as the highest, you can easily learn to control the senses; when you have controlled your senses, you know who you are; and when you know who you are, you realize that the universe rests in you, that it has no basis except in you, and that you are beyond birth and death.

How does attachment come? How do the senses become outgoing? That man who makes much of sensual enjoyment, who thinks that out of sounds, forms and touches alone enjoyment can come, naturally becomes attached to these; just as when gum is on the table, if something is laid on it, the object will stick to it. A man thinks: "I want to be happy only in the world, and nowhere else can I be happy"; and out of this belief attachment for the world springs up. So long as these feelings hold him, he will be tied to the world by a strong

cord of attachment and he will not be able to get away from it. As the result of this attachment desires come into existence. Then when something rises in the way and prevents the fulfilling of these desires, he grows angry. When a man becomes angry, he loses the power of discrimination between right and wrong; and his egotism goes to such a length that he thinks nothing even of insulting his superiors or the *Guru* (Spiritual teacher) to whom he is so much beholden. Thus egotism, which in itself is such a puny thing, under the influence of anger can become greatly inflated. There is no worse delusion than this. At that moment a man perpetrates the worst kind of evil without any compunction whatever. Then when that unnatural condition leaves him, he himself will have to repent. So man is the cause of his own death. But since this destruction comes through attachment, we should give up attachment.

How are we to do this? We should neither like nor dislike any thing. When the senses have been freed from liking and disliking, then if the man enjoys the world, with their help, they will never bring evil to him. Rather he will have a certain power, a certain satisfaction in his mind. He who has been able to bring his mind under his control by the above method, such a man will be able to realize within himself perfect peace and contentment.

And what will be the result of this peace and contentment? In that contented condition of mind he will never commit a blunder. When the mind is restless, it cannot think properly and one commits all sorts of mistakes. But not so the other man. His intellectual faculties are very clear; he sees all, he knows the true nature of things,—what he should leave and what he should accept, and he realizes the Truth.

This can be done only if we can free the senses from undue likings and dislikings. It is because control of the mind and of the senses will bring us peace and contentment and through these we shall attain to the realization of the Truth, that Sri Krishna tells us in the Gita that our *Buddhi* or intellect must be clear. We commit blunders and mistake one thing for another because our *Buddhi* is confused; the mind is covered with dross. If a man wishes to achieve success in any walk of life, his intellectual faculties must be very clear. A man who has no control over his body, no control over his mind, such a man is very dull, his intellectual faculties are clouded and he confounds everything taking a friend for a foe, the wrong for right. He cannot think relevantly on any subject for a minute. How can such a dull uncontrolled man be peaceful? How can such a restless mind be happy?

Whenever you fully enjoy any sort of pleasure, even sensual pleasure, for the time being restlessness leaves the mind and you are happy. So long as the mind is restless, it is unhappy. When there is rest, there is happiness. We must not be *ayukta* (undisciplined). We must not let the mind and senses rule over us. We must rule over them. Otherwise we can never be happy, and we shall make all those about us unhappy, too. Just as the pilot who is at the mercy of the wind is lost, so the man who is at the mercy of the senses is lost. The senses steal away all peace from a man, as the wind steals away the boat from the shore and sinks it in mid-ocean.

As long as you are held by any one of these senses, as long as you care for good food or sweet sounds or beautiful sights, you cannot hope to fix your mind on God. You will have to go out of the creation first. And when you go out of the creation where must you go? To the Creator. The more you can take your mind and senses away from the world and fix them on God, the more you will find peace and happiness. And this can most easily be done by realising through discrimination and experience that God is the highest and most desirable thing in this universe.

THINKING NATURALLY OF ONESELF

THE permanent state of all living beings is calmness. Whenever any one fluctuates from that state one becomes restless and struggles hard to regain the lost balance. What is calmness? Calmness and sameness are synonymous. Calmness means changelessness. When you change from one condition to another in rapid succession you are said to be perfectly restless. But when you remain in the same condition without any change whatever, you are said to be perfectly calm. Calmness and sameness are thus one, and is known as the monistic consciousness.

Let us substitute the words 'birth' and 'death' for 'change',—for change means death of one condition and birth of another,—we find that the state of restlessness is one of birth and death, and absolute rest, calmness or peace is birthless, deathless and eternal. Hence our natural state is eternal, and that is why we hate death so much. But the moment we step out of our true nature, we grow anxious, restless, and all sorts of false thoughts invade our mind, and we get afraid of disease, death and thousand other anxious circumstances.

This fall from the original glory, this forgetfulness of one's true nature, this stepping out from the eternal into the ephemeral, is the mystery and

pain of life. How is it, do you ask, that you have forgotten your blissful, all-knowing, all-powerful, eternal, infinite nature, and identified yourself with a finite and changeful being subject to birth and death, fears and anxieties? The answer is: "Because you have been thinking unnaturally about yourself. It is because you have been identifying yourself with the body for ages and ages,—you have been thinking so poorly about yourself. There is a Spanish proverb, "He who lives with dogs will learn to bark." According to your associations, will your manhood grow, and you have been in the bad habit of thinking all false thoughts about yourself for ever so long. The struggle against this bad habit, the struggle against those false thoughts, is real, practical religion. Religion can never be theoretical. A man may say, "I am eternal, perfect, infinite," yet if he has not realised it, his professions are mere sound and nothing else. To know and to become,—that is religion.

Practical religion is that which enables you to wage an incessant war against your unnatural way of thinking. The idea that you are Mr. So-and-so, that you are short or tall, dark or fair, happy or miserable is all false. You are nameless and formless, birthless and deathless, eternally blissful and above all miseries. You have taken such a big jump out of your natural condition into the

unnatural, that you are now in utter darkness. You have so absolutely forgotten your true nature and identified yourself with your apparent one, that you are thinking yourself just the opposite of what you really are. And the only way out of this muddle is renunciation of your false nature, giving up all these false ideas. Tell yourself: "This landed property does not belong to me, this wife and these children are not mine. This body even is not mine. I am beyond body and mind, beyond time and space, beyond birth and death, I am all-perfect, all-full, all-good. No anxiety can ever come to me, no misery can ever come to me, no disease or death can ever touch me. I am there where no fear has access, where no pain has access, where no anxiety can ever enter. I am infinitely happy, infinitely secure, infinitely perfect. How glorious I am! No name can be given to me. I am not man nor God, nor a Brahmin, neither rich nor poor. Nothing can qualify me. I am without limitation or quality. When I am, nothing else exists. Beside myself, nothing else can be. I am the past, the present and the future. I am one and I have become many. And all things that exist are only myself in so many forms."

This is what is called realisation, emancipation, 'onlyness'. You shall have to realise it, and in so far as you realise it in this life, you truly exist.

If you fail to realise it in this life, you will have to be born again and again. All weakness must be conquered. Truth is never realised by the weak. Throw away all these false notions that you are tall or short, fair or dark, man or woman. Do you remember while you sleep that you are tall or short, man or woman? No ; then you are calm, peaceful, self-existent. That which you realise involuntarily, learn to realise voluntarily.

As Hanuman cleared the Strait of Manar, so do you jump over the strait of Illusion, and fall at the feet of Sita, the Eternal Wisdom. Otherwise you will have to remain on this side with the monkeys. You must have the strength of Hanuman! What made him, a monkey, so great? It was his faith in his Divine nature. He said, "Why shall I remain here? Let me go there where I shall find my true nature." So he found his true self, while the others were left in ignorance.

You must cross this ocean of Samsara. Otherwise you are not worth the name of man. The more you analyse yourself, the more you understand yourself, the more you realise your infinite nature. Then these little ambitions of yours, these little troubles of yours, will seem too small for you. This little life will no longer be able to hold you. These little thoughts of money, name and fame will appear too insignificant. You must see the littleness

of everything, and you will no longer find satisfaction in your finite condition. Say: "All these little things are too insignificant for me who am infinite". Thus think little of your finite knowledge, your social power, your wealth. Think: "These are not for me, these are intended for the deluded, for limited beings. But I am limitless and I must go beyond this life to satisfy my infinite hunger".

If you remain satisfied with finitude, do you know what awaits you?—innumerable deaths. You have seen man die. What agony! Such pain will be yours again and again till you realise your infinite nature. The key to unlock the door of infinity is in your own hand: but you are like the man who went about seeking for his necklace until some one came and told him that it was round his own neck. In the same way, some one must point out to you that your 'necklace' is there, that what you are searching for, you have already. And that some one is the Guru. He reminds you that you cannot be born, you cannot die, that you are eternal and infinite.


The secret of discovering the glory of your true self is with you. Apply it. Be not led away by the senses. You have sunk your wisdom in the quagmire of sensuality, and therefore you are miserable. Beware of sensuality. The senses are in your way. The wayward mind, the body, all stand in your way.

They have deceived you. They have enslaved you. It is because you feel like a slave, that you yield. The cause of delusion is sensuality. Do not therefore let your senses rule you. Do not let the mind rule over you. The army should not be allowed to lead the commander, then the battle is sure to be lost. It is the commander that should lead the army. Be the commander of your senses. Be the commander of your mind. Make them obey you absolutely. Be their master. Unlock the shrine of infinite bliss, then will you enjoy the treasures of infinite life, bliss and wisdom.

THE WAY TO FREEDOM

THE whole universe exists for each one of us between the two ends of the nerves,—this outer end on the surface of the skin and the inner end in the spinal column. One part of the net-work leads us out through the channel of the eyes, another takes us out through the ears, another through the tongue, still another through the nose, and so this universe of forms and sounds, tastes and smells comes into existence. We are as it were caught in this net of the nervous system. We have entangled ourselves; and we seem to like to entangle ourselves; such is the perversity of our nature. But only when we extricate ourselves from this labyrinth of nerves can we hope to be free. And there is a process by which we can escape. This process is called Yoga; and we can get out by Raja-Yoga, or Jnana or Karma or Bhakti. When we have got out and are free, then we shall see that this universe is all God's play. So long as we are caught in the net of the nerves, life seems to be a serious thing; and it is serious. That we were strong and now we are weak; that we were rich and now we are poor; to us these are undoubtedly facts, and so long as they are facts to us, we shall have to believe them. But as Ashtavakra says: "If even at this moment

you can throw off this idea of the body then at this very moment you will be free." When that comes, we shall not need a new entertainment to make us happy, for we shall be happiness itself; we shall not go about seeking knowledge of this or that, for we shall realize that we ourselves are infinite wisdom; we shall not have to follow the rules of hygiene to keep up life, for we shall know that we are life itself.



BOOK FOUR

**THE PATH ACROSS
THE MAZE**

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता । ४.१३

*In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way
do I fulfil their desires: (it is) My path, O son of
Pritha, (that) men tread, in all ways.*

THE COMMON BASIS OF ALL RELIGIONS

(This talk was given to some Mohammedan students who took refuge in the monastery during a storm; hence the reference to the Semitic idea of a Satan. The young men were so much interested in what the Swami had to say, that they returned every evening for a week to have him expound to them the tenets of their own religion.)

THE IDEAL of all religions is God, God alone. As different rivers, taking their birth in different places, all flow towards the one ocean, so every religion leads to God. In whatever religion a man belongs, he has to worship the one God. According to the Semitic belief, whatever is not God, is called Satan. The two existences are God and anti-God. What is Satan? If we want to know what Satan is, it is very easy for us; but it is very difficult for us to know what God is. What then is Satan? That which makes me forget my God. And what is that? The ego. The ego makes me forget the Lord and believe that all these things belong to me. So what in Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism they call Satan, in Vedanta we call ego or selfishness. All ideas of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' are satanic, because they are based on ignorance and put the ego in the place of the Lord of the whole universe. Therefore some philosophers declare that

ignorance is Satan and wisdom is God, for it is always ignorance which leads a man to doubt the existence of God. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God."

It is only out of vanity that men deny the existence of God. Such people make much of the ego and think that the human mind can unravel the mysteries of the universe; but it is as absurd to suppose that this puny mind can understand the workings of the Lord, as that an ant can lift up the Himalayas and plunge them into the Bay of Bengal. This human mind by itself is so weak, so slavish in its nature, that we cannot imagine anything weaker or more helpless. Does it remember what it thought or did last week, or last month, or when it was five years old? Has it the power to go beyond this universe? No. Then it is subject to all sorts of temptations. It is led away by anything and everything in the outside world. Can it always even keep itself awake? No, it is often and often overpowered by sleep. It is also like a monkey, with no power to keep quiet even for a moment. For this reason, one of the greatest warriors of India has said that the mind is so unsteady and tumultuous that to curb it is more difficult than to curb the wind. What is the meaning of restlessness? Weakness. It is the weak man who is restless. The weaker a thing, the more it is

restless ; the stronger it is, the calmer and steadier is it. A little plant bends and quivers at the slightest breeze, but the Himalayas remain unmoved in the fiercest storm. Therefore this constant restlessness of the mind shows its weakness, its flimsiness.

How precarious too is the life of this body ! I am talking here at this moment, then suddenly I may stop, my body will become stiff and people will say that I am dead. Having such a body to call my own, having such a mind to call my own, how can I be vain and proud ? That man must be absolutely in the hands of Satan who makes much of this body and mind ; or who thinks this body and mind to be his own property. Neither the mind belongs to me, nor the body. To whom then do they belong ? They must belong to Him from whom they come. I am evidently not my own master. If I were, I could stay here as long as I chose ; but the moment God calls, I must go away and leave parents, relatives, property, all that I care for. So nothing is mine. " Nothing belongs to me, all is Thine, O Lord ! " This is true wisdom. " All is mine," is satanic ; " All is Thine," is of God. This every religion teaches.

The essential parts of all religions are the same. It is only in the non-essential parts that differences are to be found. Therefore we need

not find fault with other religions on account of their differences in external manners. That which makes up the external is the shell side ; it is always rough and hard and difficult to break, but it has one advantage, it preserves the kernel. Religion may be defined as ' giving God his due.' God alone is the proprietor of the Universe. He alone is the proprietor of me, the proprietor of you ; recognizing this and giving up all to Him is religion. Wishing to keep all for oneself is irreligion. Throw away the idea of ' me ' and ' mine ' ; give up all to God : this is the essential of every religion. This is what Mohammedanism teaches, what Christianity teaches, what Vedanta teaches, what every religion teaches.

Human nature is all the same. Only dresses differ. What is in the dress ? You may wear a coat and trousers, I may wear this one simple cloth ; but underneath, the nature is all the same. Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall go away again. But behind all dress, all ceremonies and religious rites is this one idea,—to realize God. Christian, Mohammedan, Hindu all are striving for this. Jnana-Marga, Bhakti-Marga, Karma-Yoga, Raja-Yoga (the paths of wisdom, devotion, work and self-control) all lead to this. To realize God is consciously or unconsciously the aim of every man. He may seem to be drawn away by a beautiful

face, by sense-pleasure or ambition, but he will never find satisfaction until he has reached God. This too is the common basis of all true ethics; for all that takes man to God is morality, and all that takes man away from God is immorality.

In the realm of law, however, there is religious law and there is social law, and we must discriminate between them. God commands us to punish those who disobey Him. Why should we punish them? To make them obedient servants. But Christ says: When a man strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other. Is this not a contradiction? No. The one is a religious law, the other a social law. The one is meant for those who have given up the world; the other for the householder, who must punish the wrong-doer to protect society.

A man who wants nothing but God, if someone asks him for his house, he will say: "Yes, take it. I do not want it." But that is only possible for a man who is a *Sannyāsin*, who has given up the world and all worldly ties; not for one who has a family and still wishes to live in the world. If a householder should practise such non-resistance, there would be general depredation, the good would be destroyed and the wicked would prevail. Punishment is not a bad thing. If you have done something which helps to rectify a man you have done

good to him. We should not let the wicked thrive. In a field there are always weeds, but if you want to reap a good harvest you must pull them out. Yet it must not be done in a revengeful or malicious spirit based on egotism. Satan always wants to revenge. God sent Satan out of heaven because he was not worthy to remain there, but He was not angry with him. The attitude of God towards Satan is always pity; the attitude of Satan towards God is that of revenge, jealousy, hatred. Those are always satanic who are revengeful or destructive, for vengeance is based on egotism, on the seeing of difference; and the seeing of difference is ignorance, the seeing of sameness is knowledge. This is equally true of those who persecute in the name of religion, as of those who fight or kill for worldly gain. Vedanta says that a good Jew, a good Christian, a good Mohammedan and a good Hindu are all the same, for they are all faithful servants of the Lord. In whatever country they may live, they are equally God's servants. As Sri Krishna teaches in the Gita: "Whoever seeks me by whatever method, of him do I make the faith firm and unwavering." And again: "Howsoever do men resort to me, even so do I serve them. My dear son, know that all paths have been marked out by me." This is Vedanta. The God of Vedanta was not discovered by Buddha.

He was not discovered by Christ. He was not discovered by Mohammed. He is revealing Himself throughout all ages. He has revealed Himself throughout the beginningless past, and He will continue to reveal Himself throughout the endless future.

HARMONY OF RELIGIONS *

"THE LOTUS FEET OF SRI GURU BE MY REFUGE"

IT is only through the grace of the Lord that petty men like ourselves meet learned men like you. The company of virtuous men gives rise to the desire of knowing the Truths about God and their revelation; and it is only through the knowledge of the Truths about God that men can absolutely get rid of the threefold miseries of human life and attain the final beatitude. Desires are created in the mind by association with the unreal, sensuous objects, whereas the company of holy men destroys them. It has been also said, - the company of holy men brings about desirelessness, desirelessness brings about the cessation of ignorance, with the cessation of ignorance Truth is ascertained and if one can ascertain the Truth, he can enjoy living freedom. Therefore, it is superfluous to add that association with holy men opens the portal of salvation.

In the present age three great personages have been born in this land of India, who have

* English rendering of Swami Ramakrishnananda's Sanskrit lecture on '*Dharma samanvaya*' delivered at the Mysore Sanskrit College, on 8th October, 1903. For the original please see the Appendix.

ascertained the Truth. All of them have adorned the Deccan by incarnating themselves here. The great Acharya Sankara, the very incarnation of Siva preceded the others. The ontological truth, "Brahman is real, the world is unreal and Jiva is no other but Brahman," was thoroughly established by that great philosopher. That imperishable supreme Brahman alone is eternal, all-pervading, immovable, beyond time, space and the law of causation and His true nature is Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. On the contrary, this universe which exists in time and space, and is determined by the law of causation is unreal and false. By the word false is not meant void but that which has beginning and end, and is transitory like pleasure and pain, heat and cold—this is the import of the word according to Sankara. This Brahman is the real nature of Jiva. But the Jiva, over-powered by the beginningless illusion as he is, superimposes the Atman in the physical body and thinks, "I am fat," "I am old and decrepit," "I am one-eyed," "I am hump-backed"; and by superimposing the Atman in the mind he thinks "I am happy", "I am miserable". Deluded by such false ideas, he cannot know his real nature and falls into the well of *samsāra*, full of poisonous water. As a consequence, he gets birth, death, disease and old age repeatedly and suffers untold miseries; and is at

last snatched away by the world-destroying time. Though he is thus taken away by time, he has to undergo all sorts of afflictions there on account of past actions. If he chances to get the company of pious men by virtue of meritorious works, he can learn the fourfold *Sādhana*s from them and can slowly get rid of ignorance. Just as darkness is dispelled as soon as the sun appears in the horizon so do a man's sufferings and miseries cease, when he attains true knowledge. Never can a man attain true knowledge without serving holy men. The Lord himself says in the Gita, "Know that, by prostrating thyself, by questioning, and by service; the wise, those who have realised the Truth, will instruct thee in that knowledge." If only the Jiva can know his real nature, he can know the Atman to be one undivided Existence, Intelligence and Bliss, which cannot be burnt, nor wetted, nor dried and which is eternal, all-pervading, unmoving and immovable. No more does he return to this samsara. Bhagavan Sankara has ascertained this truth by examining thoroughly and discussing *Śruti*, *Smṛiti*, *Purāṇas*, History and other Scriptures.

In course of time, as the followers of his school of monism gave up the company of holy men, they lost the fourfold *sādhana*s, as laid down by Sankara, and became unfit for the realisation of

Truth. Thus overpowered by delusion and ignorance, they began to read quite opposite meanings in the great sayings. Having failed to grasp the true import of the great sayings like "Thou art that," - "I am Brahman", according to the fundamental doctrines of the Vedanta they began to pervert their meaning. The result was that they identified this gross physical body, which is three and a half cubits high, limited by name and form, bound by the ties of attachment, and having its origin in ignorance, with the imperishable, unattached, supreme Atman and gave up all scriptural injunctions. They were behaving like *chandālas* and became almost human brutes. In order to save such deluded men from the ocean of this mortal samsara, the Lord Vishnu, the author and father of this universe incarnated Himself as Sri Ramanujacharya in the city of Mahabhuta, and as Sri Maddhwacharya in the city of Udupi, thus fulfilling His own promise in the Gita, "Whenever virtue subsides, and irreligion prevails, I body Myself forth." They found that men were devoid of the power of discrimination between the real and the unreal and sixfold sadhanas like the control of the inner and outer senses, hankering after the fruits of actions here and hereafter, and not at all longing for the salvation of their souls. Such deluded fools were unfit for the knowledge of

the identity of Jiva and Brahman. Seeing the spiritual life at such a low ebb, both of them not only found fault with the meditation of Brahman in His absolute aspect, but also condemned and ridiculed it.

It has been proved by Sri Ramanuja that *Iswara* is endowed both with intelligence and non-intelligence. Therefore, the followers of his doctrines are known as qualified monists. He styles the Lord in the form of Vishnu as *Śeṣhi*, who is possessed of infinite auspicious qualities and devoid of any inauspicious quality. The creation, preservation and destruction of the whole universe is His sport. All the created beings from Brahma down to the lowest have been proved to be *Śeṣha*. These finite created beings are the eternal servants of the Lord. Deluded by ignorance and hankering after the enjoyment of sensuous objects, they have forsaken the service of the Lord and have become the servants of desires ; and, as a result they fall again and again into the ocean of this mortal samsara. In the course of performing virtuous actions, or through the grace of the Lord, when they give up the servitude of desires and become the servants of the Lord, they give up the vanity of the ego and come to realise that they are themselves minuter than the atoms and the Lord is greater than the greatest. Then, they

become deeply attached to the Lord and can enjoy supreme beatitude, with their mind fully absorbed in Him and doing only His work by mind, thought or speech. Then, according to the Lord's own pronouncement, "O Son of Kunti there is no rebirth, after attaining Me," no more do they return to this *samsara*.

The attitude of servitude to the Lord has been accorded the highest place also by Sri Maddhwa-swami. He has defined Intelligence, Non-intelligence and Iswara, and has shown their eternal relation. But he does not admit that Iswara is endowed with both intelligence and non-intelligence. If any body can give up the fickleness of mind and the senses and, through the grace of the Lord, can forsake the servitude of the sensual desires and become His servant, then and then only, he becomes blessed by attaining the supreme beatitude of human life and by getting rid of all kinds of miseries for ever. He takes his refuge in the feet of the Lord, and no more does he return to *samsara*.

All these three great men have ascertained the goal of human life to be the cessation of rebirth in this mortal *samsara*. Although there is divergence of opinion amongst them as regards the methods of attaining that stage - (the above fact is patent enough because of their propounding

different paths of Sadhana) - yet there is unanimity amongst them on the following point :- That they all long for crossing this ocean of samsara, and knowing the Lord of the universe, for it is only by knowing Him that one can get rid of all kinds of sufferings and miseries that man is heir to. Who is able to cross this ocean of samsara ?

“These Truths spoken by the Great Ones are revealed only to him, who has deep reverence for the Lord, as well as for his Guru.” “Free from pride and delusion, with the evil of attachment conquered, ever dwelling in the Self, with desires completely receded, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that goal eternal.” “Who has conquered the world? He who has conquered mind.” ‘The knowledge of this world comes through the senses.’ “The objects are superior to the senses, the mind is superior to the objects, the intellect is superior to the mind, the great Atman is again superior to the intellect. The unmanifested is superior to the great (Atman), and the Purusha is superior to the unmanifested. Nothing is superior to the Purusha; - that is the finale, that the supreme goal.” Thus, following the steps prescribed in the Upanishads, men, who have conquered their inner and outer senses and have completely withdrawn themselves from

the external world, cross the ocean of samsara and attain that supreme Beatitude of Vishnu, "where speech cannot reach with mind and turns back."

If anybody can get complete mastery over the senses, be it through God's power or one's own power, or through Jnana or Bhakti, there is absolute cessation of all miseries for him. This is the opinion not only of our own Rishis, but also of the Huns and Yavanas. Though the paths followed by men appear different according to the difference in degree of *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, yet they are virtually one. "Amongst the different creeds of *Veda*, *Sūnkhya*, *Yoga*, *Paśupata* and *Vaiṣṇava* there are some who claim one of them to be superior to others. As rivers running from different sources run crooked or straight to the one ocean, so all the different religions, rising from different standpoints lead to Thee." Although these creeds appear to be different on account of the divergence of tendencies and aptitudes, yet the goal they aim at is one. Hence it is quite evident that they are all true. As the different radii of a circle, taken from the different points of its circumference converge to the same centre, so do all apparently conflicting religions lead to one omnipresent and all-pervading God who is the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction

of the universe, the author of the animate and inanimate beings, who is all in all and seated in the cavity of the heart of each and every one. The Blessed Lord, too, says, "In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires: (it is) My path, O son of Pritha, (that) men tread, in all ways." Just as a chameleon changes its colour according to its own sweet will and sometimes becomes colourless, so does the Lord reveal Himself in various forms, out of His grace for the devotees. He is at once possessed of form and formless, agent and non-agent. The Lord, too, says, "Though I am the author thereof, know Me to be the non-doer and changeless." Bhakti leads easily to Him. "For, taking refuge in Me, they also, O son of Pritha, who might be of inferior birth,-women, *Vaiśyas*, as well as *Śūdras*, even they attain to the supreme goal. What need to mention holy Brahmanas and devoted royal sages. Having obtained this transient, joyless world, worship thou Me." It should not be maintained that this Bhakti is to be found only within the four corners of India; for the Huns and Yavanas, too, follow the path of Bhakti. The Buddhists, too, have Bhakti for the Enlightened One. "O Vishnu in the form of Buddha, Thou dost condemn the Vedic rituals accompanied with sacrifice of animals; Victory unto Thee, O Hari,

Lord of the universe!" Here Jayadeva acknowledges that Buddha is an incarnation of the Lord. It has been also shown in the *Bhāgavatam* and other Puranas. Therefore, all the religions can lead a man to God. But this should not lead one to forget that, "It is better to die, by following one's own religion, but it is terrible to follow another's religion."

The above conclusion being established, the man who makes an attempt to prove that his religion only is true, and other people's religions are false, is surely self-deluded and is an object of pity. Blinded by pride, vanity and egotism they think within themselves that there is no one like them and that they are the most favoured of the Lord. To redeem such impious human brutes, swarming the face of the earth like locusts, who were bent upon sucking the blood of their brother men, the Lord incarnated Himself recently as Sri Ramakrishna. He was the Guru of Srimat Swami Vivekananda, and the embodiment of Jnana and Bhakti. The land of Bengal has been adorned by his advent, auguring the spiritual welfare and the supreme bliss of many a man. It has been shown that the diversity of religions is inevitable so long as there is divergence of tendencies amongst men on account of the difference of the three gunas, viz., Sattwa, Rājas and Tamas. This great man,

too, has demonstrated its truth. He, the embodiment of Religion Eternal, has clearly shown its universality, and its necessity for all men of all times. The foolish and narrow-minded think that the eternal and universal Vedic Religion was founded by the Deity to fulfil the object of their own sect only, and not for the support of all other sects. Lack of true scriptural learning is the cause of this bigotry. If anyone studies the *Śāstras* thoroughly and reflects upon their true import, he cannot draw such an erroneous conclusion.

Knowing that you are profound scholars, well-versed in all the *Śāstras* and too compassionate to be indifferent to the miseries of others, I have stood before you to-day. It is only on account of the lack of proper study of the *Śāstras* that the present descendants of the Aryans, solicitors for the welfare of humanity, have become so bigoted and narrow-minded. It is my faith that good sense and liberality may be restored to them through your compassion. Therefore I beseech you to teach them the Vedas. It is by gift that learning augments. Those who are averse to giving wisdom are objects of pity. Expecting your kind consideration, I hold my tongue now. Hari Om.

TRUE RELIGION

RELIGION dwells in the secret chamber of the heart, and scarcely does it betray itself in the mere regularity of church-going or in any such kind of outward show. It is in inverse ratio to outward grandeur.

The sentient and insentient things of the world can be brought under the broad category of subject or object. That which sees is the subject and that which is seen, the object. In other words the self is the subject and the universe of phenomena is the object. The characteristic nature of every object is ever-changefulness. The moment an object is subjected to an ultimate scrutiny, it eludes our grasp. We do not know what the object really is, yet we all run to it for happiness.

The happiness which we are all seeking to attain we find ultimately, not in the object but in our own mind. A story is told of a king who was suffering from a peculiar disease of the eyes. The best of the doctors opined that the disease could be cured if the glare of the sun was shut out from the eyes and everything around made to put on greenish appearance. The king began to use his treasure in painting all things around him green, and even went the length of erecting green pandals throughout the length and breadth of his territories.

A sage passing by the dominions was struck with the foolishness of the king and having secured an audience with him prevented the enormous waste of money by advising him to put on green spectacles. The king adopted the advice and achieved his object at the cheapest cost. Colouring his own sight green, by wearing green spectacles he was able to see all things green. Just so if we want external objects to give us happiness we should make our mind happy—the mind by which alone they are cognized.

How to colour the mind with happiness then, that we may see every object instinct with bliss? It could be done only by realising that in self we are *Satchidānanda* (eternal Existence-knowledge-Bliss). Then would we cast an indifferent glance to all objects that evade our grasp and avoid all fascination for them. Then would we be true Bhaktas or devotees. Then would we be *givers* and not *takers*, for we would then be in the need of nothing, having realized that we are perfect. God, who is the giver, and who in fact, is the world itself, would not then be worshipped by us for a gift of worldly advancement or of bodily pleasures. The only desire that we would then cherish should be the desire to be desireless, wantless,—to be unconditioned. This desire to be desireless will take its firm root in us in proportion to the intensity

of feeling with which we realize that, in us self alone is real and all else evanescent. True religious life commences only after this. Religion thus becomes the realisation of the self and not mere parading of knowledge of religious books or the vigorous and mechanical observance of rituals and religious formalities.

Religion never deteriorates, man deteriorates. Religion is eternal. It is always the same. If you stand before the wall, it will not reflect your image—but let there be a bit of mirror there on the wall and at once you see yourself. So religion is always there unchanged, but sometimes man reflects it and sometimes he does not. The great incarnations like Christ, Buddha and Krishna were perfectly clear mirrors which gave us a perfect reflection. They did not bring us anything new. Truth is always there. Christianity existed before Christ, Christ was only the mouthpiece, Mohammedanism existed before Mohammed. Mohammed was only the mouthpiece. Each one was only a reflector of the eternal Truth. But one man catches the light from Christ, so he says, "Christ has given me the Truth; therefore I belong to Christ, I am a Christian. Another sees the light through Mahomed. So he says, Mohammed has given me the Truth; I belong to Mohammed, I am a Mohammedan." A third says, "Buddha is Truth, I belong

to Buddha." So each great teacher has his followers, who believe that the Truth came from him alone; but they all reflect the same Truth. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that if you will look at the dust of the road at sunrise, you will see some few particles which seem to be bright and reflect the sun's rays. Even in a heap of rubbish you will see such shining specks. So in this rubbish heap of this world there are such bright spots. The sun of God's wisdom is shining equally upon all, but only a few hearts reflect it. Christ, Buddha, Mohammed gave it forth in its full glory. These divine teachers alone are Truth, we are all falsehood. To throw away this falsehood we must sit at the feet of the Truth. That is why we must go to these divine incarnations and learn of them.

TRUE LOVE

NO LOVE is really love that has for its opposite hate. True love is always universal. So long as a man has an enemy and cannot bear to have any good come to that enemy, he cannot have real love. It is for this reason that Christ said: "If a man strikes you on the one cheek, turn to him the other. If he takes your cloak, give him your coat also." When you have reached that state, you have begun to feel true love in your heart.

Always remember this: There is no sin except when you injure another. If you bring tears to the eyes of another, then you may be sure that your own tears must flow; but if you can do anything to make a man happy, no matter what it is, be glad of it. You have done well. Only be careful that your enjoyment is not based on the misery of another. That is the only sin.

If we cannot feel for others, if we cannot love others, how can we distinguish ourselves from the brutes? Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, always said: 'If there is the least spark of good in any one, see only that and overlook all the rest.' He used to tell us that the difference between man and God is this: "If a man fails to serve God ninety-nine times, but the hundredth time serves Him

with even a little love, then God forgets the ninety-nine times he has failed and says: "Oh! my devotee has served me well today!" But if one man serves another well ninety-nine times and the hundredth time fails, man will forget the ninety-nine good services and remember only the failure, declaring: "That person cannot be trusted; he once did me an evil turn."

Anger is one of the signs of egotism. So long as a man grows angry, you may be sure he has not conquered his ego. When a man is vilified and yet shows no resentment or even annoyance, then you may know that he has overcome his ego and has seen God. When man asserts himself in man, then he commits all sorts of unworthy acts; when God asserts Himself in man, then he is good, pure, virtuous, and truly loving.

A MAN OF STEADY WISDOM

MIND has two sides. It is not purely spirit, neither is it purely matter. Matter is dead, unconscious; but mind knows something, so it cannot be wholly material. It must therefore be part spirit and part matter. On one side mind is in touch with the world and that mind must sometimes feel happy and sometimes miserable. On the other side, however, mind is in touch with spirit and the mind is above pleasure and pain. Spirit has been described as calm and blissful; that is its nature. Now mind is partly spirit. If then you can dwell on the side which is spirit, your mind will become established in wisdom.

How to do this? The mind must not be affected by the external universe. The definition of the mind is that which thinks, feels and wills *just as it chooses*. This '*just as it chooses*' must be added. It thinks what it wills to think, calls up what it wills to remember, feels what it wills to feel. If I think that all happiness comes from the world, then I must identify myself with the body and birth and death must follow. If I and my body are one, I shall have to die; for since the body is perishable, I shall have to perish with the body. Yet I hate to die. Then what shall I do? Shall I cling to the body and die with it? Or shall

I give up all attachment for the body, be calm and live? This is the question which inevitably arises. There is nothing I hate more than death, but if I wish to live, to be peaceful, to think on God, I must give up that which dies. The choice rests with each one.

If you wish to give up the world, at first it will, of course, be far from easy, for the mind has the habit of dwelling on the world. When you sit down and try, you may not at once succeed; but there are men who have succeeded and these examples will encourage you. To hold the mind is no doubt the most difficult thing in the world; but it can be kept under your control if you understand that life and happiness cannot be had except within yourself. Then if you desire happiness and if your desire is strong, you will long to go to that place within where it is to be found. When you go there, you discover that you are only the witness of all these outer changes. Pleasure may come, pain may come, but you remain merely as the witness of both. Then you get a mind that is steady in wisdom and you go beyond the realm of pain and pleasure.

Pleasure and pain are twins. You never find one without the other. You want bliss uncontaminated by misery; but you can never find this where pleasure and pain exist. The same nerves

are affected by the two sensations, so both rest upon the same basis. The nerves that make you feel pleasure also make you feel pain. Of course the nerves are of themselves dead, only when the spirit infills them can they feel; but when they begin to think and feel through spirit, that is only the reflection of the real spirit—not the true spirit itself. Spirit is absolutely one without a second. Just as modern chemistry tells us that gold is not a compound, it is always the same, so is the nature of spirit. Pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, honour and dishonour are not in spirit. The mind gets the idea of these from matter not from spirit; although it derives its power to know them from spirit, because knowledge comes only through spirit. Mind is always a cogniser of facts. When it turns towards the world, it is a cognizer of material facts; when it turns towards spirit, it cognizes the one fact, which is called *Satchidānanda* - Existence - Wisdom-Bliss Absolute. Thus the knowledge of the Supreme is gained by turning the mind towards the spirit. When the mind acquires this knowledge, it finds that the bliss it was seeking was all the while within itself. When the mind reaches this state, it loves to go away from the world. But this comes only from experience.

Every man is searching after wisdom, after life, after bliss. When he will discover that these

can be found only outside the world, then he will be anxious to go in that direction. We are now tied to the world because we think that life, wisdom and bliss are to be found here. As soon as we learn that they cannot be had here, then we naturally turn away from this world. We see that the world gives a little bit of pleasure, but that pleasure is limited, so we do not want to stay in it. If after steadily searching for some time a man is able to find out his true being, he will naturally care to live in that and will have no inclination to come away from it. He will feel that that is his true home and he will rest there content. Then he becomes a man of steady wisdom.

When he has thus known his real nature as absolutely one and above pleasure and pain, he will understand that when pleasant and unpleasant experiences come, they do not come from his real self and he is unaffected by them. If for any reason such a soul remains here, he will be happy anywhere in the whole universe. He may be insulted but that does not move him. He knows that he is the eternal, immutable Self. He knows that all these appearances, these pleasures and pains are in matter, whereas he is spirit, so they cannot take place in him. He merely looks on at them all as a spectator. As a man watches a performance at

the theatre, so he enjoys this great drama of the universe written by God. How many scenes it contains ! But he looks on at the spectacle unmoved, enjoying both the drama and the Dramatist.

He should be regarded as a man of steady wisdom therefore, who is never affected by pleasure or pain. Because our minds are in touch with the world, we are moved by heat and cold, happiness and misery; but his mind is not in touch with the world, so he is not disturbed by them. As the tortoise can draw in its limbs and protect itself from harm, so when a man can draw all his senses inside himself and forget the world, he cannot be moved by it. But this is not easy. Only a man of steady wisdom can thus collect his sense energies within himself by means of *pratyākāra* (indrawing the mind). For others it is the most difficult thing, because all our senses are made to carry us out into the world. Our eyes are intended to see the beautiful forms, our ears to hear sweet sounds, our tongues to taste savoury dishes. Only when a man begins to seek inside himself for happiness will his sense-energies flow inward. The mind of an ordinary man of the world naturally runs outward. Not so a man of steady wisdom ; his senses naturally flow in. So the Gita says : " What is natural for a man of the world is unnatural for a yogi." For example, it is natural for a yogi to go away from the world,

it is natural for a ordinary man to go towards it. Once someone asked Sri Ramakrishna what he felt in the state of *Samādhi*. He replied : "If you keep a fish out of water for a while and then put it back, what will it feel? That it has got back its home. So when such a soul goes into Samadhi, it feels that it has gone home, because that is its natural condition." Thus for man a sitting posture is natural and he can remain in it for a long time; if on the contrary he has to stand on his head with his legs up, he may stay for a few moments, but it is not a natural posture and soon he will have to change.

When we are in a natural condition, we are at rest; so this very struggle in the world shows that man is not in his natural condition here. A man of steady wisdom alone is peaceful. But that is the true nature of every man; and when we go within we shall find it. Only when we are calm and peaceful do we return to our natural condition. Then we cease to go outside. Now we think that if we want knowledge or wisdom, we must get it from some more scholarly man. But we must get it for ourselves. When Yudhisthira looked over the battle field of Kurukshetra, he began to grieve saying, "How many widows I have made! They are all weeping because of me." Sri Krishna was by his side; so he asked Him how he could get rid of his

restlessness and trouble. Sri Krishna replied : I can help you gain victory over the whole world outside, but there inside yourself I cannot help you. There you must fight out your own battle. I am the creator of the entire universe ; in that I am the Lord and can help you. But the moment you forget your body and go inside, there I have no access; there you are the Lord. That is your world and you must rule it for yourself. Here I am the Master and there you are the Master. But if you think that you cannot do it for yourself, then if you will throw away your egotism, I can enter and sit upon the throne. In your mind there is a throne, but you have seated yourself upon it, so there is no place for Me. If, however, you find that you are too weak to govern and will withdraw yourself, then I can come and help you. If you are there I cannot be there. In this outside world we all exist simultaneously ; there is room for Me and for you. But in that mental realm there is room only for one ; so only when you go away, can I come in and rule. Do this. Cease to think that you are the doer. Then you will find a way out of your trouble."

When you become a man of steady wisdom, it means that your apparent man has been dethroned and the real man has risen up. Your natural state then is introspective and you begin to taste true

bliss. This is the lesson we all have to learn if we would possess unfailing wisdom; we must lose all egotism and realise that everything is done by God. He is the only Doer in the universe. When you feel this, at that moment true wisdom will come. Your sense energies will then flow towards God, because he alone can make you happy. You may know a man of steady wisdom by this,—that in a moment he can withdraw his mind from the world. He may be talking to you, then suddenly his consciousness is no longer here. Just as a tortoise can at once draw in its limbs, so in an instant he can withdraw his sense energies. Only such a man has become established in wisdom and no one else. Suppose a man sits down quietly and says, "I must go inside myself." He closes his eyes, acts like a *Yogi* and thus withdraws his senses for a while. He starves his eyes, he starves his ears, he does not give any of the senses their proper food and for the time being these outer things do not exist for him. There is no touch, taste, or sound for him, but it does not follow that attachment for these has left him. He may still have an intense desire to enjoy different kinds of food; and when hunger for them again comes up, he will have to satisfy it. If you wish to get rid of attachment, of that ever-recurring hunger, it can only be done by knowing your true nature, by realising that you are wisdom itself, happiness

itself. It is said that when a man goes to take bath in the Ganges, the water being so holy, all his sins are washed off; but they perch upon the tree on the bank and when he comes out, they drop down and ride upon him once more. So we may take a bath in the Ganges of meditation, but when we come out, the world is waiting for us and falls upon us again. To escape it, we must dive deep. If we wish to escape we must go to the very source,—to the feet of the Lord. To do this we must plunge deeper and deeper inside. We must go to God and to no one else. We must realise that He alone is our true Father, he alone is our true Mother, He alone is our true Friend. Then we shall enjoy eternal life, eternal wisdom and eternal bliss.

THE BLESSED MAN

BLESSED is the man who is possessed of true devotion. He is the happiest of men because he is free from all anxieties. We are like instruments in the hands of God; when we realize this, all egotism goes. Our daily prayer to God should be: "O Lord, grant me to know my own nothingness and that Thou art all in all. Help me to realize that I am a mere instrument in Thy hands and that all is done by Thee." When a man comes to understand this, he is truly happy because he knows that his actions are guided by God, who will never misdirect him and never commit a blunder. The man who acts on his own responsibility is sure to commit blunders at every step; but the one who feels that he is only an instrument in God's hands and resigns everything to Him, always acts wisely.

To attain this state, however, one must be steadfast and humble. Humility! Destruction of ego can be affected only by humility. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna used to say that as water flows off from high ground and collects in the low places, so the grace of God runs off from the heart puffed up with vanity and gathers in the hearts of the humble. God's grace flows equally upon all, but the egotist cannot hold it, while the lowly heart

receives and retains all the grace that falls into it. Steadiness in devotion means that though you may be busy with many things, still your mind is always turned towards God. It should be like the needle of a compass; it may swing a little to this side or that, but it always has the tendency to point back to ture north.



BOOK FIVE

LIGHTWARDS

BOOK FIVE

LIGHTWARDS

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत

प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।

क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया

दुर्गं पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥

कठोपनिषद् । ३.१४

Arise, awake, (O man)! Realize (that Atman), having approached the excellent (teachers). Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread,—so say the wise.

MODERN EDUCATION AS IT HOLDS IN INDIA

THE system of education which is now in vogue, in our schools and colleges, is in its own way, no doubt, very good, but it should be supplemented, a little bit, by an education which will make our boys morally and spiritually more strong. The influence of this materialistic age has permeated almost all of our modern books with which we educate our boys. Positivism is the only theme of science and philosophy, and sense perceptions are their only standards of judgment. The world is the only thing to be studied; doted upon, and embraced with all one's might; what can not be sensed must be given up as chimerical, fanciful, and perfectly useless;—this is what the student mostly learns in our schools and colleges.

And what is the result of such an education? He has lost all faith in, all regard and reverence for the Eternal Being who disposes and arranges every cosmic particle, which, thus moved, creates preserves and destroys the universe, in infinite space and time. He does not believe that he existed previous to his birth, and is to exist after the dissolution of his body. This narrow span of life is all in all to him, which in his imagination, he regards as permanent, and thus all his hopes, all his aspirations are confined to it only. His fond

attachment to life, makes him forget its ephemeral nature, and he goes on building innumerable baseless castles in the air and dreams of himself as the undisputed Lord of all of them, alas ! sooner or later to be suddenly awakend to the grim fact, that his career has almost come to an end ! If education means expansion of mind by knowledge, can we call that education which, instead of expanding, narrows and confines the individual to this precarious, and transient duration which goes by the name of human life ? The Vedas declare, "That which is infinitely expanded on all sides is alone blissful. Bliss cannot be found in narrow and limited things. The Infinite alone is Bliss. One should desire to comprehend the Infinite." The hoary sages of old India knew what was true education, and thus educating themselves they came to know that :—"The Self alone is below, the Self above, the Self behind, the Self before, the Self is on the right, the Self is on the left, the Self alone is all this." Can death frighten him who thus expands or educates himself ? This is what is real education. If education, instead of broadening one's soul and gradually enabling it to embrace even the Infinite, narrows and coops it up in the not-very-pleasant hole of a momentary life, it is worse than ignorance, and the wise man who first uttered the sentiment, "Where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to

be wise," had perhaps, in his mind, this kind of education.

And is not our modern education something like this? You may say, that our boys have nowadays become more broad-hearted and liberal. They have almost demolished the narrowing walls of the caste system, and begun to mix more freely with their neighbours, than their forefathers had done. Nowadays, most of them do not observe that foolish restriction in food, and take all those nourishing viands which are sanctioned by the unerring decision of Science. They do not like to confine themselves to their own country, thinking it to be all in all, like the frog-in-the-well, but they want to go out to other lands to learn many new things, and thus gather more knowledge which their own country is inadequate to supply them with. Did any ancient society or nation know what great power of doing good to the world lay dormant in steam or electricity? Modern Scientific education flying on her two wings of observation and experiment has soared to those regions which our forefathers could not even imagine, and discovered those grand truths which to them appeared as incredible as miracles. Considering all these glorious achievements, can we judiciously stigmatise our present system of education as narrow and worthless?

Yes, I do not deny that some good we have derived from our education, but I am not ready to give it more credit than what is really due to it. All those glorious achievements which you have just now pointed out, are almost nothing better than so many shining soap-bubbles which are very glorious to look at, but contain nothing inside. Our boys have certainly become more broad-hearted and liberal, they are very lax in observing the caste restrictions nowadays. But is it really a fact? Have they really become so much filled with the love for all beings, that they can equally feel for all, a saint, as well as a sinner, a beautiful as well as an ugly man, a rich, as well as a poor neighbour, a friend as well as an enemy? Have they realized the highest ideal which Bhagavan Sri Krishna holds out in his immortal song Divine, in describing the state of those men who have been really able to demolish the narrowing walls of the caste system, as the truly wise look equally towards a learned and humble Brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog, a Pariah? Have they been able to garner in their bosoms that universal solvent of Divine Love, wherein good, bad, high, low, rich, poor, favourable, unfavourable, all become one? Can they look towards their enemy with the same eye where with they see their friends? Has not education made them more vain, more negligent towards their

inferiors, more fastidious, more critical in finding fault with others, more lenient and indulgent regarding their own shortcomings, and as such more selfish than their uneducated brethren? And considering this, can we say with any good reason that they have almost demolished the narrowing walls of the caste system? Have they not jumped from the frying pan into the fire, by giving up one kind of caste system and taking up another? Has the change made them better or worse? The born Brahmana does not hate his inferiors so much, as the reform-loving revolutionist hates those who are conservatively disposed. Is this love? I am not discussing here about the merits or demerits of the caste system, as it now holds in India. What I want to show, is that the so-called reform brought about by our modern education has not mended matters in any way, but has perhaps spoiled them in many cases.

The next thing our education has done is that it has saved our young men from becoming frogs-in-the-well by taking some of them to foreign countries to learn many new truths which they could not learn in India. Thanks to the British Government, whose broad and philanthropic line of action had spared no pains to bring in the light of Western Science and Philosophy to illumine this subject Empire. The liberal education received in our

schools and colleges produces men who are not in any way inferior to any of those England-returned title-holders, in points of up-to-date scientific and literary attainments. The former have got greater caution and judgement in them than their more civilized brethren who are characterized by hasty and superficial methods of procedure, in all their attempts to put new wine in old bottles, as that of thrusting Western manners and customs into our Eastern modes of living. Almost all the noteworthy children of modern education, beginning from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who have done any real good to India, at first completed their studentship here and then some of them went to the West and were recognised as learned scholars. In the face of such facts, it is useless to argue that we must go out of our Motherland in order to attain perfection.

As to the unbounded license in taking food of all descriptions from all sources, which our education has given us, we can not be much proud of it, in consideration of the fact that it is more difficult, and more noble to restrain one's passions and appetites, than giving them unrestrained liberty. Most of our educated men nowadays harbour a wrong notion that animal food can give us more physical and mental vigour than vegetable diet, in spite of the fact, that although the

Brahmanas are vegetarians from their birth, although from time immemorial their families have never soiled their hands and tainted their minds with the blood of living beings, who love life as much as any one of us, if not more, yet they are more intelligent and educated than their flesh-eating brethren, fairer and more beautiful, soberer and more considerate, in many cases. This is especially true of the Deccan which has given India three of her best religious teachers, Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, and Sri Maddhva, all of whom were Brahmanas. Food, indeed, should be taken according to one's natural craving, caused by the climate in which one lives, as well as by one's mental aptitude, which may be either thoughtful, active, or dull. A thoughtful man naturally likes food which is plain, simple and easily digestible. An active man requires life-giving and exciting food to hold him up in his incessant struggles against unfavourable circumstances. It is only a lazy, dull, and worthless man, having no discriminative faculty that takes all sorts of food without any restriction, his idea being to swallow as much victuals as possible; and alas! the number of such people is a legion. It is not at all good to take food from a man whom one knows to be immoral and wicked, because by so doing one will have to sympathise with him in gratefulness, which is as good as imbibing his

perverse nature to some extent. So it is not at all good to be indiscriminate in taking one's food. As such a laxity greatly tends to bring down the man, we cannot be at all proud of our young men's unrestrained license in the matter of messing. The food which does not suit a man's constitution is unhealthy to him, and therefore he should avoid it if he wants to live long with health and vigour.

In the beginning of the formation of one's character restriction is absolutely necessary, as it acts like a hedge round a growing plant, says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. If a plant is not protected by a fence it is beset with all sorts of dangers, and is sure to fall a victim to a thousand and one of them. But when it grows up to be a tree, the fence may be removed without doing any injury to it. Similarly when a man has his character firmly implanted in him, let him then go beyond caste and food restrictions, that will not injure him in any way. Previous to that, if he gives undue license to himself it will be as good as forcibly pulling out the slough from above a sore which has not completely healed and thus making it worse. If a frog wants to be as big as a bull, in its attempt to do so, it will burst itself out to death. Similarly, if a man with unformed character wants to imitate a man with formed character, he will fare nothing better than the frog.

Now let us consider the nature of our education which nowadays principally rests upon the study of the Science whose sweet harmony and precise character have been lately discovered by our modern *savants* and thus whose youthful beauty coupled with her various marvellous achievements has an irresistible charm over the whole humanity. Our Poetry, Drama, History, Philosophy, nay the whole range of literature have been permeated with her light. Even Religion herself fearing that her antique beauty may not be a match to the youthful charms of this newly found Maid, has begun to court her favour, and sit at her feet to learn about the proper method of procedure that will gain more customers for her old self. How this young Governess of the old Lady has tortured and twisted many of her antiquated notions, is not unknown to most of us. So Science, nowadays, is all-paramount, and in judging her beauty I am virtually judging the whole modern age which has got all its charms from her.

Observation and experiment are the two principal methods with which science starts confidently, being fully convinced beforehand about the uniformity of natural laws. Reasoning is the soul of these two methods, which in its turn, is based upon the duality of the knower and the known, the subject and the object, the *Purusha* and the

Prakriti. If it is a fact that the subject can live independent of the object, if it is not the case that the subject is a mere bundle of various ideas which are the various representations of the object, it is also a fact that the object can live as well, independent of the subject. This subject which lives independent of the object goes by the name of Purusha or Mind-in-itself, and the object which lives independent of the subject goes by the name of Prakriti or Matter-in-itself. Let us try to have some sort of conception of these two independent entities. Mind-in-itself being free from all material taints must be beyond thinking and feeling, based upon desire or will and hence must be unknown and unknowable in itself, having the power to know when it comes in contact with the object. Matter-in-itself not being known to the subject is also unknown and unknowable in itself, having the power to be known by the subject, coming in contact with it. So when neither of these two comes in contact with each other, when each is left perfectly free to itself, the subject, being void of all desires, all activities, is regarded as perfect, since desire means want, which means imperfection.

Now, because every one wants to be perfect, and none wants to be imperfect, it follows that the final separation of the Subject from the Object

constitutes the highest goal of men and gods alike. This is what is called Liberation or *Mukti*, realizing which, the man is not conditioned by or confined to any desire, and thus unconfined he becomes Infinite, or realizes his infinite nature. Being beyond all activities he realizes his eternally changeless nature, and free from all restlessness, causing worries and anxieties, he realizes his all-blissful state. This eternally, all-blissful and conscious nature of man goes by the name of *Satchidānandam*. This is indeed the only goal which all beings are struggling to reach. This is the only ideal of every man; for does not every one love to live eternally? What can be more hateful to him than the idea of death? Does he not want to be always happy? Is not misery a thing which he hates most? Is there not in him an incessant hankering after knowledge? And can that hankering in him ever cease as long as there will remain something more for him to be known? His hunger after knowledge has no limit, and it will never be satiated until he knows all. Then alone his restlessness will end. Now, as long as a man is restless he is not in his proper element, reaching which alone he finds absolute rest. Hence man's real element or nature is omniscience, for nothing short of that will ever give him rest. Thus we have found out true human nature, which

is eternal, all-blissful, and omniscient. Can he ever expect to realize this as long as he will remain connected with this universe? The knower or *Purusha* must entirely separate himself from the known or *Prakriti* before he is able to realize his infinite nature, as we have just now seen. The goal lies in this final separation, which means the destruction of this idea of a universe of *Sense*. For, what is this universe? It is offspring of the union of *Purusha* with *Prakriti*, of the knower with the known, of the Subject with the Object. It is altogether a dependent thing. It is made up of forms, touches, tastes, smells, and sounds, and thus it is based upon a conscious, living organism, and consequently is as evanescent and shifting as the latter. It is a series of ever changing appearances which mirage-like always eludes the grasp of the most acute of observers, and that is why it is known as phenomenon, as opposed to noumenon or the permanent background upon which it manifests itself like the shadowy pictures of the magic lantern. Thus it is nothing better than a passing shadow, and should always be regarded as such. This is the conclusion which we at last arrive at after properly analysing the universe. Could he be regarded as a wise man who makes much of this shadow?

But the subject matter of Science is this Universe alone which she regards as the only

reality. She does not want to admit the existence of anything which is not to be found in it. She teaches us to worship it and it alone, to make it the only subject of our study, setting aside all such transcendental ideas as that of God, *Purusha*, *Prakriti* etc. She wants to convince us that this earth is all in all. Hence she is ever vigilant to beautify and adorn it and make it so charming, attractive and homelike that men may not have any inclination to search for any other home anywhere. She holds that knowledge is power, knowledge gathered from observation and experiment.

After what we have already considered, does the claim of science appear in any way to be valid and well-grounded? Does she not make much of a shadow? Is she not like a siren that entices the passers-by with her sweet voice, and false promise only to kill them? 'Bliss is not to be found in small things,' sings the hoary sage, while she insists upon us to believe that all bliss can be derived from a shadow. Whom are we to accept, her or the Sage who promises us eternal life, all-blissfulness and omniscience? Knowledge is power indeed, but not the knowledge of a shadow but of reality. Moreover, we can never expect to get perfect knowledge of the universe as it is infinite in its bulk and eternal in its duration, whereas confined in body and mind we are nothing

better than limited individuals. Even if we get the power of knowing all about a world every second of our life, the time will never come when we shall be able to know all the worlds in the universe for they are innumerable and hence inexhaustible. So our knowledge of the universe must always remain partial or incomplete, and such knowledge is worse than no knowledge of it. It is as good as the blind men's knowledge of the elephant, in the fable. Can such a knowledge be ever desirable?

We have now fairly dwelt upon the false claim of Science upon our attention, and found out that she has no power to give us what we really desire, nay, on the contrary she has a great tendency to waylay and kill us by puffing us up with false vanity caused by a few little, ephemeral advantages of the flesh got through her. So we should not be proud of the education which we derive from Science. But, unfortunately, she has permeated every branch of learning, nay, even Religion, as we have seen. Can the young votary of such an education achieve anything truly noble and grand which will give him some real advantages in life? It is too much to expect any such thing from him. Hence the system of education now in vogue in our schools and colleges is certainly very defective.

Self-expansion should be the end and aim of true education and that can only come when it

enables us to disentangle ourselves completely from the meshes of the body. Can it be effected by committing suicide? By no means, as it increases the bondage thousandfold, being an outcome of weakness; for only those people commit suicide who have not strength and courage enough in them to face boldly all untoward circumstances. Weakness strengthens the bondage, while strength alone breaks it. What is it that binds, limits, and weakens us? Desire and not the body which is rooted in it. If you chop the branch of a tree, many more branches will grow in its place, as long as the root is left unmolested; in the same manner, if you kill one body many more bodies will come in its place, so long as the desire is there. So self-expansion requires the uprooting of desires. How can it be effected? Wherein are the desires themselves rooted? They have their birthplace in the senses. Hence by controlling the senses alone we can control desires, and controlling the latter again we can get rid of them, and thus expand ourselves in all ways, so that the whole universe may form a part of us, instead of our being mere insignificant particles of it. Can we get rid of the senses by mutilating them? No, for we can only mutilate the external organs which are merely the seats of them, they being always beyond the reach of material weapons. We

require a strong desire to control our desires for seeing, touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, thinking, feeling, and willing. As a thorn is required to extricate the thorn that gets into the body, and causes trouble to it, so an intense desire is necessary to extricate all those desires that have rooted themselves in the man to cause him various miseries, says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, and when thus one desire extricates other desires, he should throw away both of them, like the thorns.

Now, this is not a very easy affair. It requires a life long struggle on the part of a man to bring the senses under his control. A sensible man should not allow himself to be controlled by his senses, for, like unbroken horses they will drag him to destruction. But when he is able to bring them under his control, like broken horses, they will lead him to his destination, and instead of being his enemies will be his true friends. This attempt to control the senses is what Morality aims at. Hence the moral path is the only path that every man should follow, so that he may reach perfection at last. Man indeed is the creator of his own destiny. "The Self is the friend to the self, the Self is the enemy to the self", says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. "He who conquers his self by means of his Self is a friend to his Self." Indeed, man lives in his self-created.

world. It is foolishness to imagine that the world is outside and independent of him. A short story will illustrate this clearly. Once upon a time a king was suffering from an eye-disease. Doctors of note were called in, who all unanimously asked His Majesty to live amidst green environments, for some months, and then the disease would leave him. When the doctors departed the king at once ordered the whole palace to be washed so as to be green in colour. He issued an order to all his subjects in the city to similarly wash their houses, as in the course of his drive he must have to see all those. He ordered his throne, chairs, bedsteads, and seats of various sorts to be covered with green satin; and thus he took every precaution to make his surroundings as green as possible. But although he was a great, and powerful monarch and his mere word was a law to the surrounding territories, he could not manage to paint the sky green, which during that time unfortunately used to be often red, a colour which the doctors especially asked him not to look at. However he managed to canopy some of his favourite streets with green pavilions, and thus somehow managed to create a green environment for himself. This created a great bustle throughout the whole town, and the royal coffer was drained almost to the last farthing. Even with so much expense, in his careless moments, the king could

not prevent himself from looking at the red clouds. This protracted his disease and made him, his queen, and the whole royal family very anxious, on his account. His Majesty belonged to the celebrated Thick Skull family !

In a not very remote village, one Mr. Commonsense, a very poor subject of the monarch was attacked with the same disease, and his poor physician also advised him to live amidst green surroundings. After thanking him for his kind advice, Mr. Commonsense went to the nearest bazaar with a two-anna bit and purchased a pair of green spectacles with it, and putting it upon his nose was at once able to paint the whole universe with a rich emerald colour which cured his disease within a week ; what he effected by spending a few farthings, his Royal Majesty could not do spending thousands of pounds ! The secret of Mr. Commonsense's success lay in the fact that he did not regard the universe, in any way, outside himself and so changing the colour of his eyes, he was able to change the colour of the whole universe.

This clearly illustrates that every man's universe is based upon himself, and if he wants to see a pious and godly world, he should have to be pious and godly himself. Religion is self-culture, and self-culture is true education. Hence genuine education is indissolubly connected with religion.

By expanding myself, I expand the universe in which I live. Thus doing good to the world means doing good to one's own self. Our boys are sadly wanting in this kind of education. They are perfectly satisfied with the shadow and do not care to see that, of which it is the shadow. As bare mention of wine cannot inebriate a man and as he must have to drink the real wine if he wants to be intoxicated, so merely catching at the shadow can never give one shelter and protection, never take one beyond all miseries. The *Reality* which is behind the shadow of the phenomenal universe must be realized before a man expects to fulfil his three eternal cravings mentioned before. That reality goes by the name of Purusha, Brahman, or God. As he who wants to see the potter cannot be satisfied by merely looking at the pot, and as he must have to turn his back to it and search after the potter, so he who wants to realize God must not remain satisfied by studying merely the universe; he must have to turn his back to it. And how to do that? By means of Education. The study of the universe is necessary so long as it does not point out to the student the real Being behind it, who is the abode of all bliss, all knowledge, and all life. That education whose end and aim is to lead the student to truth, saving him from the enticing effects of all false glammers, is true education.

Instead of being a curse it is a blessing to humanity. If science leaving her false coquetry plainly confesses her utter inability to solve this infinite riddle of the universe, and asks her votaries to search for truth somewhere beyond her own jurisdiction as she occasionally does, to some fortunate individuals, it is then that she behaves like a goddess, and as such, fairly claims our love and reverence for her. In this her divine aspect every man should bow down to her.

Much has already been said about the absolute necessity of rejecting the phenomena to realize the One Truth behind, which is differently known as Purusha, Brahman or God although there are some apparent contradictions in the understanding of these terms. But this is more easily said than done, nay, it is the most difficult of all the feats which a human being has to perform before he can hope to realize that much-longed-for eternal peace and bliss for which he is struggling consciously or unconsciously. The senses are naturally refractory, much more, the mind. As there is no royal road to success, however trifling that may be, we must continually struggle hard with intense patience and perseverance to realize this highest of all goals. Culture of the following virtues which Bhagavan Sri Krishna mentions to Arjuna as the only means to realize that Being who alone is worthy of being

known, is absolutely necessary for this purpose. "Sacrifice of pride and vanity, non-injury, forbearance, simplicity, reverential service to the Teacher, purity, patience, austerity, non-attachment to sensual appetites, non-egoism, consideration of the miseries of birth, death, old age and disease, want of undue love and attachment towards one's own child, wife, home &c., constant mental equipoise in weal or woe, exclusive and intense devotion towards God, love of solitude, non-attraction for the company of men, constant study of the nature of self, a clear conception of the meanings of spiritual truths, '—these are the means of realizing the Highest Ideal and those that are contrary to these, blind the man and hence are known as ignorance.' 'The culture of these virtues alone is calculated to make us perfect. In Old India education was indissolubly connected with such a culture, and that is why those old students still stand as the undisputed Teachers of mankind and are called by the holy appellation of Rishis or Sages. The downfall of Modern India is due to this want of virtuous and austere practices along with the book-learned education. If our educationists awake to this degenerating defect of Modern education and try to remedy it, then there is some hope of regaining the pristine glory and grandeur for which ancient India is deservedly famous throughout the world.

WHAT SRI RAMAKRISHNA CAME TO TEACH?

IN THIS world we love nothing so much as our own egotism. Nothing is so dear to us as our own self. Therefore it is said in the Upanishads,

“Do not think that you love your wife for the wife’s sake, you love your wife because by loving her your own self is pleased; you do not love your children for the children’s sake, but because your own self is pleased by loving them you love them etc.,”

So the love for your own self is above all other loves. Other loves are secondary, love for your self is primary. Why do we love our own self more than anything else in the universe? To answer this question we must know what we love and what we do not love. We always love beautiful things. We love a beautiful man or woman, not an ugly one. We love sweet words, not harsh words, we love good dishes. We do not love to be out on a burning desert, but in the cool shade of a wide-spreading tree. In short, we love what harmonizes with our self; we do not love what does not agree with our mind. What harmonizes with my nature, that is what I love.

Thus we see that what has the power to make us happy, we love. What has not the power to

make us happy, we hate. We do not like a harsh-tongued man or woman, we do not like ugly sights, because they have not the power to make us happy. Now, if there is a man who can make me happy, and there is another who can make me more happy, and there is a third who can make me most happy, will I not love the last most of all? If then my love is based on the power to give me pleasure, I must love myself most, because I have the power to give myself most pleasure. So I must be the source of all *anandam*. From myself comes the greatest happiness, so I must be the most pleasing thing to myself in the whole universe. For this reason the love towards myself is primary.

From this it follows that I am the abode of the highest bliss. Therefore I am *Anandam*. Because, I exist, I am also *Sat*; and because I know that I exist, I am *Chit*. Hence I am called *Satchidānandam*. When Brahma first began to create, he created the four first-born and they at once found out that all that they wanted was inside themselves. Outside was darkness, doubt, fear, everything changing, and how can a sane man expect happiness from something which is constantly changing? So they knew that they could never find happiness outside themselves. So when Brahma wanted them to create they said: "No, we do not want to create, that will be forgetting our own self,

that will be forgetting our own blissful nature, that will be forgetting our all-knowing nature. Why should we create that which will make us forget what everyone is seeking after?" In this world people are all like the musk deer, who when the musk forms at the navel, smelling the delicious fragrance, think, it must come from some hidden flower and go searching here and there for it, when from themselves comes the odour that maddens them. So man goes hither and thither seeking eternal bliss which can only be found inside himself. "Why then should we make such foolish people," these first-born asked, "who will never know where bliss can be realized, where purity can be realised where knowledge can be realised? This is a wretched sort of business." So they would not create and Brahma had to bring forth a second set of seven children, from whom came all the people of this world.

You see, therefore, because I am the abode of all bliss I love myself; also because I am the source of all knowledge. There is still another thing,—I love myself because I am eternal by my very nature. This can be proved. I am tasting, touching, hearing, smelling and seeing everything around me, so long as I am in the wakeful condition. But I do not do this always, for sometimes I fall asleep. Then I do not taste, touch, hear, smell or see. I do

not even remember. When I am asleep, although I may love my wife very much and she may be by my side, I do not know her existence; I do not even know my own existence.

You may say then that I am not existing in the dream condition or in sound sleep. But that is not the case, because when I wake up, I say, "I have been sleeping soundly," which shows that I remember that I was not doing all these things, tasting, touching, seeing and hearing. To know this I must have been wide awake at that time; so I was not dead. My eyes were not seeing, it is true, my ears were not hearing, my legs were not walking, my mind was not remembering, but I must have been there, in order to report to my friend that, at that time 'I had no volition, no perception, no action.' Therefore you see that in these three conditions, dream, sound-sleep and waking-state, you are existing and conscious.

In this big life between birth and death, the senses rise and set, the mind rises and sets, your body rises and sets, but you never rise or set. In an unbroken steady flow, you are flowing on, from your birth to your death.

Thus you see that behind all things changing, there is something which does not change, and as the laws of nature are uniform throughout, you draw your own conclusions from this, just as

when you taste one mango, you conclude that all mangoes will have the same taste. You analyse your own body and mind and you find that both are constantly changing. Time was when this body could not go from one place to another, it had to have a nurse to carry it. Then it began to run and jump, then to take gymnastic exercises; and now gradually it is beginning to wane. The power is being taken from the eyes, from the ears, from the nose, from the legs, from the waist, from the mind. So you find the body in constant change and the mind constantly restless. Hence you pronounce that the nature of the body is to change and the nature of the mind is also to change. But go behind and you will find that you never change.

Now what is meant by change? If the Government changes it means the going out of one party and the coming in of another. In the climatic changes, it means that it was cold and has become hot or the reverse. Change therefore means the birth of one and death of another. Substitute the words birth and death for change and you can say, "Since I am changeless, I must be birthless and deathless." So I must be eternal. Hence I am not only blissful but also eternal by my nature.

"That I am existing, of this I cannot entertain any doubt." Suppose I doubt it, to do this a doubter is necessary; and if I doubt the existence

of this doubter, still another doubter must be here, and if I doubt this one, there must be another. So the doubter must have to be there, it must continue to exist. Now doubting and thinking are synonymous. You think so long as you doubt. For instance, you see a rope and you take it for a snake ; then you think—it may be a rope after all, but the wind moves it and again you think—it may be a snake and at last you see positively, that it is a rope and you are satisfied. So long as there was any doubt in your mind, you kept thinking ; the moment you ceased to doubt you stopped thinking about it. Hence Descartes has said, "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" If I doubt my own existence, I must think ; and if I think, I must exist. Since furthermore, being can never come out of non-being, if I am being, I must be eternal.

Whoever is born of woman must have to die, but I have just found out that I cannot die. Then if I am eternal, I cannot be the body. Who am I then ? I must be merely a dweller inside the body and the time that I dwell here is what we call life. But if I am different from the body, I cannot have the same nature as the body. If I am eternal and the body is perishable, the body and I must be diametrically opposite in nature and what is true of the body cannot be true of me. What is born of the body, can never be born of me ; so if desires are

born of the body, they cannot be born of me. Then I must be wantless ; so I must be the richest man in the whole world, for even an emperor is not free from wants. Go to Indra himself and you will find that he has some desires. Everyone has wants, but I have no want whatever, so I must be the richest man. If I am without want or lack of any kind, I must be perfect. Perfection needs no addition; so being perfect, nothing can be added to me. I am all-full. And if I am wantless, I must be unlimited and hence I must be infinite. If I am infinite, I must be infinitely conscious and if I am infinitely conscious, I must be all-knowing. And since knowledge is power, I am all-powerful. But all these conditions are true of me who am only a dweller inside the body ; they must be all inside and not outside in the world.

He has freed himself from slavery, who knows that all things that he wants are to be found inside himself and not outside ; for then all want ceases, and want eats into man, not only in this life but in all lives to come. If then everything you want is inside, is it not foolish to keep all things that interest you outside yourself, your friends, your pleasures, your pursuits, all outside yourself ? So long as you do this, you will never get rid of your miseries. This world is nothing but a gilded sepulchre.

This is what is called philosophy. After analysing, the great sages found out all this ; so they betook themselves to mountain caves or into the heart of jungles, and by going inside they discovered the fundamental truths of the universe. From this analysis of their own nature, the Vedas have come into existence. From such discoveries in the spiritual realm we have got all our scriptures. But leave that aside just now.

Coming back to our original subject, if I ask : "Who are you?" You will reply, "I am Mr. So—and—So, son of Mr. Se—and—So, a Brahmin, a Vaishnava or a Smārta, I am tall or short, fair or dark, etc." And you are thinking, "If I do not get food, starvation will kill me ; if I do not get water, thirst will kill me ; If I do not get air, suffocation will overpower me." Now to jump suddenly from this habit of thought to that other pole, that you are infinite, is not possible in a moment. So long as you love these men whom you call father, brother, friends and these ladies whom you call mother, sister, wife, daughter, you will have no consciousness of that other aspect of your nature and you will think, it is a mere idle speculation of philosophy. You will say, "I am feeling hungry at this moment, how can you say I have no hunger? I am just now suffering from a bad headache, how can you say that I am not the body?" But

can you convince me that you are three and a half cubits in length? Then I will come to your side.

Intellectually it is easy to grasp this idea that you are infinite, but when it comes to practice, it is very difficult, for you think that you must earn your living and that you must flatter this man to get a position or that one for some other favour. Because you cannot jump from one pole to the other all at once, there must be gradations. There was once an opium eater who went to a doctor to be cured of his habit. "My dear fellow," the doctor said, "You have been in the habit of taking such a large quantity of opium everyday; it will not be possible for you to give it up all at once. But do this, weigh the quantity you take each day with a piece of chalk on the other scale, but before you put the chalk on the scale always draw a mark on the floor." The patient did this and at the end of six months, he found that the piece of chalk had been reduced to half its original size and of course also the quantity of opium taken. At the end of a year there was no chalk left and he had completely broken himself off the habit.

So gradually everything can be done. Where there is a will, there is a way. If you want to do anything all at once, you will not succeed. Suppose a man has been in the habit of telling one hundred lies a day. That teacher who says to him

“Telling lies is very bad, you must not tell any more,” will not be of any use to him; but the teacher who will say, “You are in the habit of telling one hundred lies a day; very well, begin by telling only ninety-nine, then reduce it to ninety-eight and so little by little you will overcome the bad habit,” he alone will be able to help him. This is the way all great teachers do. When a drunkard, who used to come to our great Master Sri Ramakrishna, would ask him, ‘Should I give up my drinking?’, he would reply, “No, why should you give up your drinking? Go on just the same, but before you drink, offer the wine to God.” Then this man would go away thinking, “Here is a man who holds out a hope to me and yet does not ask me to give up my drinking.” So he goes on, but he offers up what he takes to God and this thought of God gradually drives away all impurities and he cares less and less to drink. For this reason Sri Krishna says in the Gita, “Even if a man of unholy life is devoted to me, you must regard him as a Sadhu. But you may object, “He is very wicked; how can I regard such a man as a Sadhu?” Because, Sri Krishna says, he has formed a good resolve, so quickly doth he become righteous and attaineth to peace. He who is devoted to Me is sure never to be undone. So when Sri Ramakrishna asked these men to

offer what they drank to God, they began to acquire the habit of offering other things also to God. Then they began to inquire about this God to whom they were offering and thus their mind was turned more and more towards God and less towards sensual pleasure. In this way Sri Ramakrishna cured many drunkards. This is always the way that a true teacher proceeds. No one will say to a baby, you will have to walk four miles for your food; it is equally beyond the strength of an ordinary man to become perfect all at once.

The duty of a true teacher, therefore, is not to resist nature, but to give nature its course and gradually turn it. If you wish to stop a train, you must do it gradually; otherwise you will overturn the cars and kill many people. Stopping by degrees is successful as well as natural. So, great teachers never ask a man to become perfect at once and in this respect our scriptures are the wisest. Swami Vivekananda taught in the West that other religions give one coat for all. But it is not possible for one coat to fit all men and in the same way one religion cannot suit all people. Christ taught, "If a man strikes you on the one cheek, turn to him the other." This is all very nice, but who can follow it? Only a Christ. So although He was an Avatara-Purusha, He was not as good a teacher. He taught

that you must not cast pearls before swine, but He himself actually did it.

A true teacher always goes down to the level of the taught. Suppose a graduate of Oxford goes to inspect schools and gives a problem in integral calculus to the scholars, would you consider him a good teacher? No; a teacher who can never let himself down to the level of the taught is not a true teacher. This blame you can never lay at the door of Hinduism. It has a religion for the *Sāttvika* nature, for the *Rajasika* nature and for the *Tāmasika* nature. Every man differs in his powers; therefore, each should be taught in his own way. Hinduism is not one religion. It is a combination of religions. It is for all the past, for all the present and for all the future. For this reason it is called *Sanātana Dharma*. Just as a mother with several children knows what dish will suit each one best and prepares that for him, so Hinduism is like a mother. She knows what each of her children requires, so she has cooked different dishes to place before the different ones. Somewhere she says, "Sacrifice meat before the Mother"; and to another she has said, "You must not injure the least living being". If a man drinks wine, if a man eats flesh, this is according to nature, but if a man can abstain from these things, he is the higher man.

This is the way we should teach. We should not blame anyone, but we should lead everyone up gradually. Ninety-nine per cent of people cannot pull on in this world without fish and flesh. All over the world man is eating fish and flesh. Only in India we find some few, and those chiefly the Brahmins of Southern India, who are strict vegetarians. So the Hindu Scriptures say, "It is alright to eat flesh, but sacrifice it to the Mother." This is why foreigners who are not conversant with the teachings of our Scriptures do not understand and misrepresent our religion. But Hinduism blows both hot and cold from the same mouth. Yet it is not contradictory. It is intended for all people in all countries in all ages. Therefore a true Hindu never finds fault with any religion. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita: "By whatever path you seek to reach Me, by that path you will attain me." This is how the Hindu Scriptures have taught, "I am the only path. I am the only way". Because people have misunderstood this, they have thought the special Saviour whom they follow to be the only one. Thus Christian believers believe that Christianity is the only way and Mahommedans have insisted that believing in Muhammed is the only way. But Hindus, who have had a broader teaching, should never condemn any religion.

You should, however, never give up your own religion. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell this story : A man was sinking a well and dug twenty cubits down when a man came and said, "Who told you to dig here? Just a little farther down you will strike a rock. Come with me, I shall show you a better place." So the man followed him to the new spot. But after he had dug some forty cubits another man came and exclaimed, "My dear fellow, you will never get a drop of water here. Come, I will show you a place where dig a few feet and you find water." The man again followed him and went down this time eighty cubits, but found no water. Thus he dug in all one hundred and forty cubits, which, had it all been in the one spot, would surely have brought him water. In the same way, we should not go from one religion to another. Suppose I take up my religion. God may not come at once, but after a few years, if I am sincere and determined, He is sure to come. If a man sticks to his own religion and practises it sincerely, I am sure He will realize God in this life.

For a man to believe that he is the chosen child of God to whom alone God has revealed the truth is absurd. God is not so limited. He is constantly revealing Himself to all men. It is right, however, that you should stick to your own

religion and love that, but without condemning any other, just as a daughter-in-law in a house loves her mother-in-law and father-in-law and all her other relatives, but the greatest love of her heart is always for her husband.

This is what Sri Ramakrishna came to preach and when these ideas were proclaimed at the Parliament of Religion at Chicago, they were accepted by all the civilized nations of the world.

Every man in this world is born with a teacher, and if you follow his teaching with earnestness, even in this life you will be able to realize infinite perfection in yourself.

THE RAMAKRISHNA IDEAL *

BHAGAVAN Sri Krishna in describing to Arjuna His infinite nature says that "Whatever special greatness, power or beauty you see manifested anywhere, know that to be a product of a part of My splendour." It is only given to a Hindu born in this blessed land and brought up in the traditions of the *Sanātana Dharma*, the privilege of recognising the Child of Devaki as the very incarnation of the Lord. But as a matter for regret, many persons educated along occidental lines doubt even the very existence of a higher power, that shapes and moulds our destiny, not to speak of those unfortunate souls who feel no compunction of heart to put forth themselves as rank atheists. A little examination makes it clear that atheism or agnosticism creeps only in those hearts too low and narrow to hold higher ideals. Oh man, if you had the power of doing anything you desire, I shall not be sorry to recognise you as God. If none had the power of binding you, if you had the mettle in you to cross the bounds of death and enjoy ambrosial bliss for ever, if you had the energy in you to satisfy the craving for knowing all, to clear the weeds that hide the path to knowledge,

* Translated from an article in Bengali by the author.

if for the time, with no effort, you could command all conveniences to satisfy all the desires of your heart, then He whom we address as God, is none but your honourable self. But think for yourself once and you find that you are just the very antithesis of all these suppositions. Do you want to see in you unparalleled beauty? But your personality has neither grace nor excellence in it. Do you dream to be a millionaire? But alas! you are the child of poverty. Had you the power, you would not have ushered your existence in this world through a peasant's hut. You would have preferred to grace a rich man's mansion rolling in the luxury of wealth and convenience. You would never have depended on this fragile despicable body, heir to a thousand ills of life. You would surely have welcomed a strong and beautiful frame. At times you are born blind and lame of body—a very picture of misfortune itself. You want to rule over every one. Not to speak of others, your sons and beloved partner in life, dearer to you than your own self, thwart you at every step and never want to live in obedience to your commands. Powerless as thou art, is it not a stroke of lunacy that fills your imagination with such empty hopes? That Eternal Power, the Divine Mother, binding all, Herself ever free, energises you and me and the whole world at large. In course of

time even the most powerful and famous Emperor has to lay down his head on the lap of Death to have his eternal rest. His funeral pyre consumes with him all his cherished hopes and desires. None can control the Time Spirit. "*Kūlo hi duratikramah*" The rich become poor in no time. The despised beggar of to-day, is to-morrow worshipped by all. Can anyone ever dream of controlling the *Kūlaśakti*? Yet the moment man forgets this irresistible power and feels freedom for himself, and dreams "*Konyosti sadriśo mayā*"—"who is there equal to me"—that very instant he becomes blind with ignorance. This Time Principle is a true phase of the Divinity. In Time, creation, existence and dissolution take place. So the Śāstras call the *Kūlaśakti* the mother of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. She is also none other than the Brahman of the Vedantists.

Wherever you note a greater manifestation of this *Kūlaśakti*, there God expresses Himself intensely. Those who have read the *Bhāgavatam* can understand that in Sri Krishna this power was working in an extraordinary degree. No power could ever bind Him, but he could shake the foundations of the most powerful sovereignty of the day. After establishing His own power he has given out the secret that whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, He, the Lord, incarnates to help

mankind. When Arjuna got frightened on seeing His real form he requested Him to tell him who He was. The Blessed Lord in reply said, "*Kālosmi lokakshayakrit pravriddhah*". "I am the all consuming time". The Lord says again, "*Ritepi tvam na bhavishyanti sarve*", I protect none but persons like you devoted to Dharma". This makes it clear that the Lord is devoted to Dharma and the establishment of righteousness is His ideal. The working of the *Kālaśakti* makes this clear. Some are of opinion that in the three previous yugas—*Satya*, *Tretā*, and *Dwāpara*—Dharma was protected; but in the present age the foundations of Dharma do not rest on a sound basis. We find so much of irreligion prevailing now. Nevertheless, even in this age, though you may find here and there persons, notoriously unrighteous in character, who have become rich by foul means, still even they would never like to be counted as irreligious. Like a ghost that stalks only in the darkness of the night, *adharma* never has the courage, nor will ever attain the strength to show its face in the naked light. Even now the spirit of the Great ones rules the land. Even now the Rishis and seers, the custodians of Dharma, the various incarnations of Vishnu, the influence of the great Sankara, the incarnation of Siva, of Ramanuja, the incarnation of *Sesha*, and of *Maddhva*, the incarnation of

Anjaneya, the Spirits of Zoroaster, of Jesus and of Mohammed, and the very expression of true knowledge and divinity in Buddha Deva command the respect of the world. They exercise their influence on the various nations and empires of the present world and will for ever continue to do so. So there is no doubt in saying that Dharma alone stands unaffected in the course of the working of the all-consuming *Kūlaśakti*. Time never takes its toll from Dharma and is partial towards it. He, in whom this Dharma expresses itself to a great extent, is acclaimed by the world as the incarnation of God. The Lord has spoken through Arjuna to a world at large that wherever there is a fuller manifestation of power, He is present there. Even now the appellation of Bhagavan is given to him who is specially endowed with all such graces. Humanity falls at His feet and worships him as God: Anyone going contrary to the rules and precepts of these Great ones, stands outcasted before society. He is anathematized in the present life and the future is dead to him. He leads a degenerate life sunk in all evil propensities. The mean-minded heart is the region of all sorrow. The purified heart is the seat of happiness. Three things are said to be very difficult to obtain, i. e. *manushyatvam*, *mumukshutvam*, *mahāpurushasmāyāh*. It is very difficult to get a human birth, an earnest

yearning for God, and lastly the company of holy men. Those unfortunate beings unblessed by a Mahapurusha, never attain peace at any time. The Mahapurushas occupy a unique position. They breathe the spirit of the *Kālāsakti*. The whole universe manifests in time and is sustained in it. The *Kālāsakti* rules the world; so too the *mahā-purushas*. Their words are the Śāstras. Their sacred utterances form the Vedas, the Puranas, and the Bible, the Koran, the Tripitaka and the Zendavesta and for all times they guide the evolution of humanity. They infuse hope and courage in the hearts of humanity that suffers from the wails of *samsāra*. They have cleared the path for men to reach the real goal of life and themselves treading in it, have shown a practical way out. We cannot describe their greatness. They are our real fathers. Our earthly father is only instrumental in our coming to this world. But our Divine Fathers give us perpetual benediction, hence they are called our Gurus. The Divine Mother takes their forms and presents Herself before us, as our Gurus and we worship them with the words :

“गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरुवे नमः ॥”

When the *Kālāsakti* is angry with us the guru can

help, but when the Guru is displeased with us no power can help us :

“ गुरौ रुष्टे न कश्चन ”

At the present age in whose blessed heart the Divine Mother has enthroned herself ? By surrendering to whom do hundreds of weary souls hope to gain deliverance ? Who is that Great One to free the ignorant, now, from the grip of atheism and agnosticism ? On whom the eyes of all aspirants fall, in this present age of the decadence of *Dharma* ? Where is that loving Guru whose paternal words moisten the parched soul and blossom the heart to celestial light ? Who is that Enlightened Personage, whose devotion and wonderful spiritual experiences, in the garb of an illiterate man, command the universal reverence of the so-called educated world ? Who is that *Mukta Purusha* who hiding his real personality, works through the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, and with His light of wisdom illumines the whole world ?

Really the life of Sri Ramakrishna is unique in all respects. We have heard from him that to gain spiritual wisdom, worldly means are of no avail ; Sri Krishna has also given the self-same advice :

“ या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ॥ ”

etc.

The very life of Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this truth. We cannot grasp this through the intellect. For what the world recognises as good, is bad in His eyes; and that which succours to ordinary man's well-being was the cause of all misery to him. It is very difficult to take any measure of his greatness. To understand him a little, it is absolutely necessary to examine a few incidents of his pure and exalted life. We have already mentioned that wherever there is an extraordinary exhibition of power, God is present there in a special sense. Now it is possible for you to question, can an illiterate Brahmin, paid rupees ten for his priestly office, have so much power in him to exact the worshipful reverence of the whole world? You may say that such is not the case. Yet the life of Sri Ramakrishna hidden from public eyes a decade back, has begun to influence the modern world perceptibly. There is hardly one at present who is unacquainted with his name or desists to pay homage to his greatness. What may be the reason for this? In reply we can only say that his illiteracy and poverty are the very qualifications that have made his name so widely known. To achieve the end, the means are necessary. The goal is reached through the path. But does it need any proof to proclaim the greatness of one who has achieved the end without the usual means, who has

reached the goal without betaking to the ordinary paths. One can gain a battle with all equipments for it. But does it not require superhuman power, to defeat a host of enemies armed with all the implements of war single-handed without any material to fight. He who achieves this, is universally recognised as Divine. In the modern age, the certificate for erudition is gained through reading books. The more one has read, the greater is his name as a scholar. It will not be exaggerating the truth if I say, that Sri Ramakrishna's book-knowledge was practically nil. He used to call a *grantha* a *granthi*—that which binds. Scholarship tickles the vanity of man, binds him to worldliness with knots of egotism and pride. In his youth, he picked up the acquaintance of a learned pundit. Sri Ramakrishna used to attend with eagerness all his learned conversations. He used to explain the truth that the *Jagat* is false and Brahman alone is true. So Sri Ramakrishna had inferred that the pundit was free from attachment to the world. But the very same pundit having got some blows from the world betook to officiate as a *purohita*. This shook away all his faith in the pundit and thence forward he understood that true wisdom and bare book knowledge are poles assunder. He lost all his respect for scholarship. In after life, he used to compare the pundits carrying on heated

discussions on Vedantic problems, with kites that mount up high in the heavens, but have still their eyes on the carrion below. Their lips may voice forth the great truths, but their hearts are soaked in worldliness. One of his disciples once relinquished his *seva* only to find more leisure to push on the study of some Parsi texts. In loving terms, the Master admonished him, 'Dear one, such studies distract the mind and dims one's devotion to the Lord.' These words brought the disciple to his senses.

The mind gets preoccupied with various disturbing thoughts, by too much study. The real imagination of man is vitiated. If any study helps to build up this imagination, well and good; but on the other hand if it stifles all originality in man, then away with it.

Thus giving up all studies, the master dived deep into the recesses of his own heart in search of Truth and finding that rich treasure mine began to distribute its wealth to all alike day after day. The scholar, the illiterate, the prince, the peasant and all considered themselves blessed in drinking deep the words of advice from the perennial fountain of his wisdom and realisation.

We have studied that the Upanishads speak of two kinds of knowledge (*vidyā*)—*parā* and *aparā* i. e. the primary and the subsidiary. The knowledge

got by studying Vedas and Vedanta is only the subsidiary one, but *parā vidyā* or the ripe knowledge has been designated as superior wisdom. This takes one to the very foot-stool of the Lord. We could not well understand, then, the full import of these differentiations. Sitting at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, we were able to grasp a little of the nature of that knowledge which the Upanishads speak of as superior. With the help of this *parā-vidyā* Sri Ramakrishna attracted towards him the scholar and illiterate alike. This phenomenon we have not witnessed any where else in the history of the world and this is the special characteristic that has marked out the Master's life as superbly divine.

Now-a-days one will not be respected unless he is rich—wealth makes even an illiterate fool respected by society. The impossible becomes possible through wealth. The modern world worships at the altar of wealth; but Sri Ramakrishna considered this wealth, as the very root cause of all mischief and misery. He spurned even the very metals out of which coins are shaped. He could not touch any material made of metal. At their very touch his hands and fingers used to go out of joints, as it were. This extreme detachment attracted towards him very wealthy persons, who considered it a privilege to be of service to the Master some how.

or other. He never wanted money, but it came to him unasked. A close study of his life makes these points very clear.

It is necessary to amass wealth for future use, for we cannot be certain when we may be stranded in want; but Sri Ramakrishna would never think not only of the morrow but of the very next moment. One day he went to a garden house of Srijut Sambhu Mallick, a devotee of the Master. There the Master used to take a stroll now and then into the garden and rest for a while in the drawing-room of the bungalow and treat his host with interesting talks. On one such occasion the Master was suffering from colic. Srijut Mallick suggested to the Master to use a little opium. And unnoticed by the Master he tied a little opium on the Master's cloth. It was broad daylight. The Master took leave of his host but alas, he could not find his way. He was groping in darkness, as it were. He had already taken a mistaken path, when Sambhu Mallick reminded him, "Sir, the path does not lie that way", the Master replied, "I feel everything covered up as in the pall of mist. Have you put anything in my cloth?" Sambhu Mallick then told the truth. The Master could walk well only after the opium had been removed from his cloth. The attitude of the Master against amassing anything was so strong. Such being his

nature, others had to look after him. The Divine Mother brought him many attendants and devotees who spared no pains to look after his comforts. His life was a fulfilment of the Lord's promise :

“अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥”

“Whoever renouncing all other considerations meditate on me, ever contented, I look after them and arrange for all their comforts”. The true import of these words we could understand only by seeing the life of the Master.

In this world, attachment is the cause of all worldly happiness. The attachments of love makes worldly life so sweet. One who has no attachment or bondage has necessarily to become a beggar in the streets. Even he has to care for his torn rags, for fear of losing it. Therefore bondage and attachment in some form or other are real signs of worldliness. Sri Ramakrishna used to get frightened at the very mention of the word, bondage. Bondage keeps one tied to mundane interests. Freedom can never be had in bondage. Bondage never allows the lotus of the heart to blossom. Those who are eager to drink deep the waters of wisdom and roam about in the intoxication of divine ecstasy should never allow bondage to enslave them. The Master used to count bondages

in all shapes with such repugnant feelings, that it was often difficult for him to put on, even a piece of cloth round his waist. Somebody else had to do it for him, since society demanded this as a matter of decency. His very behaviour was like that of a child of five years. So his Divine Mother looked after all his needs.

The Divine Energy that moves this universe, Sri Ramakrishna knew as no other than his Mother. Like the babe that never for an instant would leave the lap of its mother, the Master was never separated from his Mother. Remaining at all times in the loving care of the Divine Mother, he enjoyed fearlessly the bliss of maternal caress. In this world of *samsāra*, where can unstinted happiness be found but at the feet of the Divine Mother? So he used to bring to the presence of his Divine Mother any aspirant after truth. Really so long as we look upon women as mothers they too will reciprocate the true filial affection. They will regard us as their own pet ones. But the moment we cast lustful eyes on them, that second the sexual impulse will predominate in us. Marriage brings us the responsibility of looking after the wife. The wife can then never regard us with the devotion of a mother to its child. In fact all that burden of care falls on us instead. The freedom and cheer of youth no more gleam in the face. We begin to suffer from

the cares and worries of a family life for the rest of our life. Wrinkles on the face disfigure its love-lines and peace for all times bids farewell to us. Pointing to a calf the Master used to address his disciples; "See, how beautiful it is, how it enjoys life. But the moment you throw a rope on its neck, it loses all its buoyancy and freedom of movement. So too the bond of marriage is for man. It chains you to misery and freedom and happiness fly away from you."

Freedom and independence are the roots of happiness. These endow man with extraordinary strength and beauty. Sri Ramakrishna never lost these. He could not limit himself in any manner. His heart was as broad as the skies. He could sympathise with all the various religious sects of the world. He used to say, the Lord can never be described by 'this or that.' The great ones, Suka, Janaka and Narada enjoying one drop from that divine ocean of bliss got such divine intoxication. The Master used to say, "I have known Him, as with form and without form, also even beyond all these. No one has known His real nature. All the religious paths of the world are only so many ways to attain Him. You proceed on the path you have chosen and in course of time you must reach the same eternal goal."

In Sri Ramakrishna there was no taint of

egoism. He could not utter the words, "my and mine." In places where these words have to be used he would only use the Bengali word, "*ekhāṅkār*" meaning "belonging to this", pointing to his body. If he wished to say, "This is not my opinion", he would only say, "This is not the opinion of Her who inhabits this body." Since he had no egoism in him, all the thoughts and actions of his person he used to attribute to that of his Divine Mother. From this, we can understand that She who took up the body of the Master was none else than the Mother Kali. She incarnated in the form of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and showered blessings on humanity. Reader, I have given you a slight idea of the Ramakrishna Ideal. Poor and insignificant as I am, my words can never describe even a little of His greatness. If you really search after Truth, I can give you no better advice than to be acquainted with the life of the Master. In the degree your desire for Truth is satisfied, you will be saturated in bliss, you will in truth feel a wonderful energy coursing through you, you will be literally transformed into bliss and remain blessed for ever.

FINIS

APPENDIX

॥ श्री श्री गुरुपादपद्मशरणम् ॥

श्रीमद्भगवदनुग्रहादेव सुधीवर्याः, भवद्विधैः सद्भिः सह अस्म-
द्विधानां क्षुद्राणां समागमो भवति । सत्सङ्गादेव तत्त्वजिज्ञासा जायते,
तत्त्वञ्च प्रकाशते । तत्त्वज्ञानादेव पुंसां द्विविधदुःखानां अत्यन्तनिवृ-
त्तिः निःश्रेयसाधिगमो भवति । असद्विषयसंगात् कामः सञ्जायते,
सत्सङ्गात् कामो विनश्यति । उक्तञ्च — सत्सङ्गत्वे निःसङ्गत्वं,
निःसङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वं, निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलत्वं, निश्चलत्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ।
अतः सत्सङ्ग एव मोक्षद्वारकवाटपाटनकर इति किमु वक्तव्यम् ?

वर्तमानकाले अस्मिन् भारतखण्डे त्रयस्तत्त्वनिर्णयकर्तारः
सञ्जाताः । ते सर्वे दाक्षिणात्यं अलंकुर्वन्तः अवतेरुः । साक्षाच्छङ्कर-
मूर्तिः श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्यस्तेषां प्रथमः । तेन महात्मना ब्रह्म सत्यं जग-
न्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मेति नापर इति सम्यक् निर्णीतम् । अक्षरं परमं
ब्रह्मैव नित्यं सर्वगतमचलं देशकालनिमित्तातीतं सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपं
अन्यत् देशकालनिमित्तजन्यं जगत् मिथ्या अनित्यमेव । मिथ्याशब्देन
सादिसान्तं शीतोष्णसुखदुःखादिवत् अशाश्वतं न तु शून्यमिति
श्रीमच्छङ्करानुमोदितार्थो ग्राह्यः सर्वत्र । तद्ब्रह्मैव जीवस्य स्वरूपम् ।
जीवोऽयं अनादिभ्रान्तिवशात् देहे आत्माभिमानितया स्थूलोऽहं
स्थविरोऽहं काणोऽहं कुब्जोऽहं मनसि च आत्माभिमानितया सुखी अहं
दुःखी अहं इत्याकारमूढभावग्रस्तः स्वरूपमज्ञात्वा जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधि-
दुःखदोषसंकुले विषयविषयुक्तनृणातोयपूर्णं संसारकूपे संपतन् अशेष-
विधदुःखानि अनुभूय पश्चात् लोकक्षयकृता कालेन ग्रस्यते । काल-
कवलितोऽपि स्वकर्मवशात् तत्रैव संपतन् अशेषविधानि दुःखानि पुनः

पुनरनुभवति । कदापि सत्कर्मपरिपाकात् तस्य यदि सद्भिः समागमो भवति, तदा तेभ्यो लब्ध्वा साधनचतुष्टयं शनैः शनैरज्ञानं त्यजति । सूर्योदये यथा तमः, ज्ञानोदये तथा तस्य भ्रान्तिजन्यमशेषदुःखं तदा विलयं याति । सतां सेवनं विना तु ज्ञानं कदापि न लभ्यते । श्रीमद् भगवतापि उक्तं, तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रक्षेन सेवया । उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ स्वरूपावबोधानन्तरमयमात्मानमखण्डं सच्चिदानन्दमदाहमह्येयमशेषं नित्यं सर्वगतं स्थाणुमचलं सनातनं मत्वा खं संसारकूपे न पुनरावर्तते । श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणेतिहासादीन् ग्रन्थान् सम्यक् विचार्य श्रीमच्छङ्करभगवत्पादैरिति विनिश्चितम् ।

कालक्रमात् तत्सम्प्रदायभुक्तानां अद्वैतमार्गगामिनां सत्सङ्ग-परित्यागात् साधनचतुष्टयाप्राप्तेस्तत्त्वज्ञानं न सम्भूतम् । अतएव मोहा-दज्ञानाच्च महावाक्यानां भिन्नार्थपरिकल्पनात् ते अशुचौ नरके पतित-वन्तः । भागत्यागलक्षणाद्वारेण तत्त्वमसि अहं ब्रह्मास्मीत्यादीनाम् महावाक्यानां अर्थमविशोध्य पदमालमवलम्ब्य विरुद्धार्थं कृत्वा ते सार्धबिहस्तपरिमितं दुःखमयमज्ञानजन्यमासक्तिपाशबद्धं संसारिणं नामरूपपरिच्छिन्नमात्मानम् अक्षरं असंगं परमात्मानम् मत्वा सर्वान् विधिनिषेधान् विहाय चण्डालवदाचरन्तः नरपशुत्वमापन्नाः । मृत्यु-संसारसागरात् तान् समुद्धर्तुं लोकगुरुर्जगत्पिता विष्णुः—यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत । अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्॥ इति स्वप्रतिज्ञापालनाय महाभूतपूर्या श्रीमद्रामानुजरूपेण उद्भूत्याञ्च श्रीमन्मध्वाचार्यरूपेणावततार । लोकान् नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकपरिशून्यान् इहामुत्तार्थफलभोगलिप्सून् शमदमादिपदसम्पत्तिरहितान् अमुमुक्षून् दृष्ट्वा तेषां जीवब्रह्मणोरैक्यज्ञानाय नास्त्यधिकार इति मत्वा तात्कालिक-निर्गुणब्रह्मोपासना उभाभ्यामेव भृशं तिरस्कृता, निन्दिता, उपहास्यतां जीता च ।

श्रीमद्रामानुजेन ईश्वरस्य नित्यमेव चिदचिद्विशिष्टत्वं प्रतिपादि-
तम् । अतएव तन्मार्गागामिनां विशिष्टाद्वैतवादीत्यभिधेयः । अनवधिका-
शेषकल्याणगुणसमन्वितो हेयगुणरहितो निखिलभुवनजन्मस्थितिभंगादि-
लीलो विष्णुरूपधरो भगवान् शेषितया निर्णीतः, आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्ताः
चित्सङ्गाः शेषत्वेन प्रतिपादितास्तेन । शेषाः सान्ताः भगवतो नित्य-
किंकराः मोहवशात् विषयभोगवासनावशाच्च ते श्रीमद्भगवत्कैङ्कर्यं
विहाय कामकिंकराः सन्तः पुनः पुनः मृत्युसंसारसागरे पतन्ति ।
सत्कर्मपरिपाकात् भगवत्कृपया यदा कामकैङ्कर्यं विहाय ते स्वीकुर्वन्तो
भगवद्वाक्यं निरहङ्कारतां गच्छन्ति, तदा स्वानामणोरणीयस्त्वं विभोश्च
महतो महीयस्त्वं परिज्ञाय तस्मिन् परानुरक्तिवशात् तन्मनस्कास्तदा-
लापास्तुविचेष्टाः सन्तः परमानन्दभोगभाजो भवन्ति । तदा मामुपेत्य
तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते इति श्रीमद्भगवद्वाक्यात् न पुनरावर्तते
न पुनरावर्तते ।

श्रीमन्मध्वमुनिनापि भगवद्वाक्यं सर्वोपरि प्रतिष्ठापितम् ।
चिदचिदीश्वराणां तेषां संबन्धानाञ्च नित्यत्वं प्रतिपादितं, नतु ईश्वरस्य
चिदचिद्विशिष्टत्वं अङ्गीकृतं तेन महामुनिना । इन्द्रियलौक्यं मन-
श्चाञ्चल्यञ्च निगृह्य यदि कश्चित् भगवत्कृपाद्वारेण विषयभोगवासनां
कामकैङ्कर्यञ्च त्यक्त्वा भगवत्कैङ्कर्यं कुर्वन्नास्ते, तदा तस्य निखिल-
दुःखादीनां अत्यन्तनिवृत्तिर्भवति, परमपुरुषार्थश्च तं भाग्यवन्तं वृणोति ।
श्रीभगवत्पादमूलं लब्ध्वा न स पुनरावर्तते न पुनरावर्तते ।

तथैव महात्मानः मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि अपुनरावर्तनं लक्ष्यत्वेन
निर्णीतवन्तः, केनोपायेन तल्लब्धुं शक्यते इत्युपायनिर्णयविषये यद्यपि
सर्वेषां तेषां अनैकमत्यं विभिन्नमार्गैः परिस्फुटं प्रतिभाति, तथापि
सर्वेऽपि ते भुवनस्य पारं गन्तुकामाः, भुवनपतिप्राप्त्यर्थं तत्प्राप्त्यैव
स्विविधदुःखानामत्यन्तनिवृत्तिसम्भवात् । भुवनस्य पारे केन गन्तुं

शक्यते? यस्य देवे पराभक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ । तस्यैते कथिता
ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनाम् ॥ निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्म-
नित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः । द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ता सुखदुःखसंज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यभूटाः
पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ जितं जगत् केन, मनो हि येन । इन्द्रियजगत् जगत् ।
इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः । मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा
महान् परः ॥ महतः परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः । पुरुषान्न परं
किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ॥ इत्युपनिषदुक्तसोपानद्वारेण
भुवनस्य पारं गत्वा तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं—यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते
अप्राप्य मनसा सह—लभते शान्तो दान्त उपरतेन्द्रियकर्मा विजितात्मा ।

स्वशक्त्या ईश्वरशक्त्या वा भक्त्या वा ज्ञानेन वा लब्ध इन्द्रिय-
निग्रह एव निखिलदुःखबन्धात् मोक्षं ददाति इति न केवलमस्मदीयाना-
मृषीणां मतं हूणानां यवनानामपि अलैकमत्यम् । नृणां सत्त्वरजस्तमोगुण-
तारतम्यात् पन्थानो भिन्नाः लक्ष्यन्तु एकमेव । त्वयी सांख्यं योगः पञ्च-
पतिमतं वैष्णवमिति, प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ।
रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादजुक्कटिलनानापथजुषां, नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसा-
मर्णव इव ॥ पन्थानश्च रुचीनां भिन्नतया यद्यपि विभिन्नाः प्रतिभान्ति
लक्ष्यैकतया सर्वेषामपि तेषां समीचीनत्वं स्फुटमेव । यथा प्रभिन्न-
प्रस्थाना व्यासाद्वर्गः एकं केन्द्रं प्रति गच्छन्ति, प्रभिन्ना धर्ममार्गा अपि
एकं विभुं सृष्टिस्थितिप्रलयकर्तारं लोकगुरुं चराचरपितरं निखिलदुःख-
ध्वान्तरविं सर्वभूतहृद्देशनिवासिनं सर्वकर्तारं गुहाशयं सर्वमयं देवं
प्रति गच्छन्ति । श्रीमद्भगवतापि उक्तञ्च—ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव
भजाम्यहम् । मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ कृकलासो
यथा स्वेच्छया स्ववर्णं परिवर्तते, कदापि वा अवर्णो भूत्वा अवतिष्ठति
श्रीभगवानपि तथा भक्तानुग्रहाय बहुरूपैरात्मानं प्रकाशयति । सम-
कालमेव स साकारो निराकारश्च, कर्ता अंकर्ता च, तस्य कर्तारमपि

मां विद्वद्यकर्तारमव्ययमिति भगवदुक्तेः । भक्तिस्तत्पादमूलं सुलभी-
करोति । मां हि पार्थ न्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापशोनयः । स्त्रियो
वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्याः
अक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा । अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ सा
भक्तिर्भारतखण्डे एवास्ति अन्यत्र नास्ति इति न वक्तव्यं, हूणयवनानां
भक्तिमार्गानुसारित्वात् । बौद्धानामपि बुद्धभक्तिर्दृश्यते । निन्दसि यज्ञ-
विधेरहह श्रुतिजातं सदयहृदयदर्शितपशुघातम् । केशव धृतबुद्धशरीर
जय जगदीश हरे ॥ इत्यत्र श्रीजयदेवेन बुद्धस्य अवतारत्वं स्वीकृतम् ।
श्रीमद्भागवतादिपुराणे पूर्वं प्रतिपादितत्वात् । अतएव सर्वे धर्माः
श्रीमद्भगवत्पादमूलं प्रति गन्तुं क्षमाः ॥ अनेन तु स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः
परधर्मो भयावहः इति न विस्मर्तव्यम् ।

एवं सति यः स्वकीयस्य धर्मस्यैव केवलं सत्यत्वं समीचीनत्वं
अन्यधर्मानामसत्यत्वमसमीचीनत्वं स्वीकरोति, प्रमातुं यतते च, स
मूढः शोच्य एव दम्भाभिमानमदान्धतया स केवलमात्मानं भगवत्-
प्रियतमं मन्यते, कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया इत्यज्ञानविमोहितः सन् ।
एतान् पापण्डान् पङ्गपालवत् धरणीवक्षे समाकीर्णान् भ्रातृशोणिताक्त-
कलेबरान् क्रूरान् नरपशून् उद्दिधिर्षुः श्रीमद्विवेकानन्दस्वामिवर्यस्य
गुरुवरो देशिकराजः श्रीमद्रामकृष्णाय्यः कश्चिदतुलनेयज्ञानभक्तिमय-
विग्रहः पुरुषोत्तमो श्रीमद्वङ्गदेशमलंकुर्वन् बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय
इदानीमेव प्रादुरासीत् । सत्त्वरजस्तमोगुणभेदात् भिन्नरूचीनां अत एव
भिन्नमार्गानुसारिणां प्रयोजनाय बहुविधधर्माणामवश्यम्भावित्वं समी-
चीनत्वं सम्यक् प्रतिपन्नं प्रतिपादितञ्च तेन महात्मना । सनातनधर्म-
रूपेण तेन सनातनधर्मस्य सार्वभौमिकत्वं सर्वकालं सर्वजनप्रयोजनीयत्वं
सम्यक् दृष्टम् । स्थूलदृशां सङ्कीर्णमनसां दृष्टौ तु सनातनः सार्वभौमि-
कोऽपि वेदमूलोऽयं धर्मः कस्यचित् सम्प्रदायस्य प्रयोजनसिद्ध्यर्थमेव

विधातृविहितो, न तु सर्वेषां रक्षणाय । शास्त्रज्ञानाभाव एव एतत्
सङ्कीर्णतायाः कारणम् । शास्त्रे सम्यक् अधीते चिन्तिते च न कस्यापि
अस्मिन्नपसिद्धान्ते रुचिर्भवति ।

भवन्तः पण्डितवर्याः, सर्वशास्त्रकुशलाः, परदुःखासहिष्णव इति
मत्वा दासोऽहं भवत्सकाशमद्यागतवान् । शास्त्राणामध्ययनादेव सर्व-
लोकहितचिकीर्षूणामार्यवंशसंभूतानां वर्तमानवंशधराः क्षुद्रचित्ताः
सङ्कीर्णमनसः सन्तः इदानीं भृशं शोच्याः भवन्ति । भवतां करुणा-
कटाक्षादेव तेषां सुमतिर्भवति इति मत्त्वानोऽहमद्य तेषां स्वाध्याया-
ध्यापनार्थं भवतः प्रार्थये । दानेनैव विद्यायाः उपचयो भवति । ज्ञान-
खलाः शोच्या एव । भवतां सकरुणकटाक्षं प्रतीक्ष्य अधुना तूष्णीं
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
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